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# Tracing Pathways

Exploring sense of place through  
metaphor and material.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design  
Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Penny Ronald  
2018

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“When we look at the world as a world of places we see different things. We see attachments and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meaning and experience.”

- (Cresswell, 2004, p. 11)



Figure 1. My familys farm in Fairfax, 2017.



# Abstract

This research project seeks to highlight local textile production by exploring the concept of place in the context of design practice. Focusing on the farm in Southland where I am from, weaving has been used as a metaphor in order to interpret the place conceptually as well as materially through using natural colorants and wool from New Zealand.

Notions of thinking through making have informed my design methodology, using the process of developing iterations of different drawings and designs to influence the resolve of the final outcome. The research celebrates residue of process, showing the constraints of what my physical body was able to weave in relation to the immensity of the farm landscape.

I have contextualized my final outcome of a woven pathway within the framework and principles of slow design, developing a provocation which aims to create discussion around localism and slow textile processes such as natural dye and weave. As is the goal of all slow design, the overarching aim is to contribute to the shift towards sustainability, with the suggestion that this project could be expanded to include different localities, or to influence designs of a commercial nature.

At the heart of this project is my passion for New Zealand wool. This is the key driver for my exploration and the material that is used throughout this project. I intend to highlight connections between the crossbred wool industry and localism by delving deeper into my family's farm where wool is grown. Through slow design, I intend to provoke the viewer to consider more holistically the connection between wool, and the area which it originates from.

The *thinking through making* framework has allowed me to authentically approach this research project as a journey, revealing the many layers of the farm and new pathways that have emerged as the project developed. I have chosen to order this exposition accordingly, describing new layers of research and design iterations as they have developed and then bringing the research together by examining slow design principles and localism.

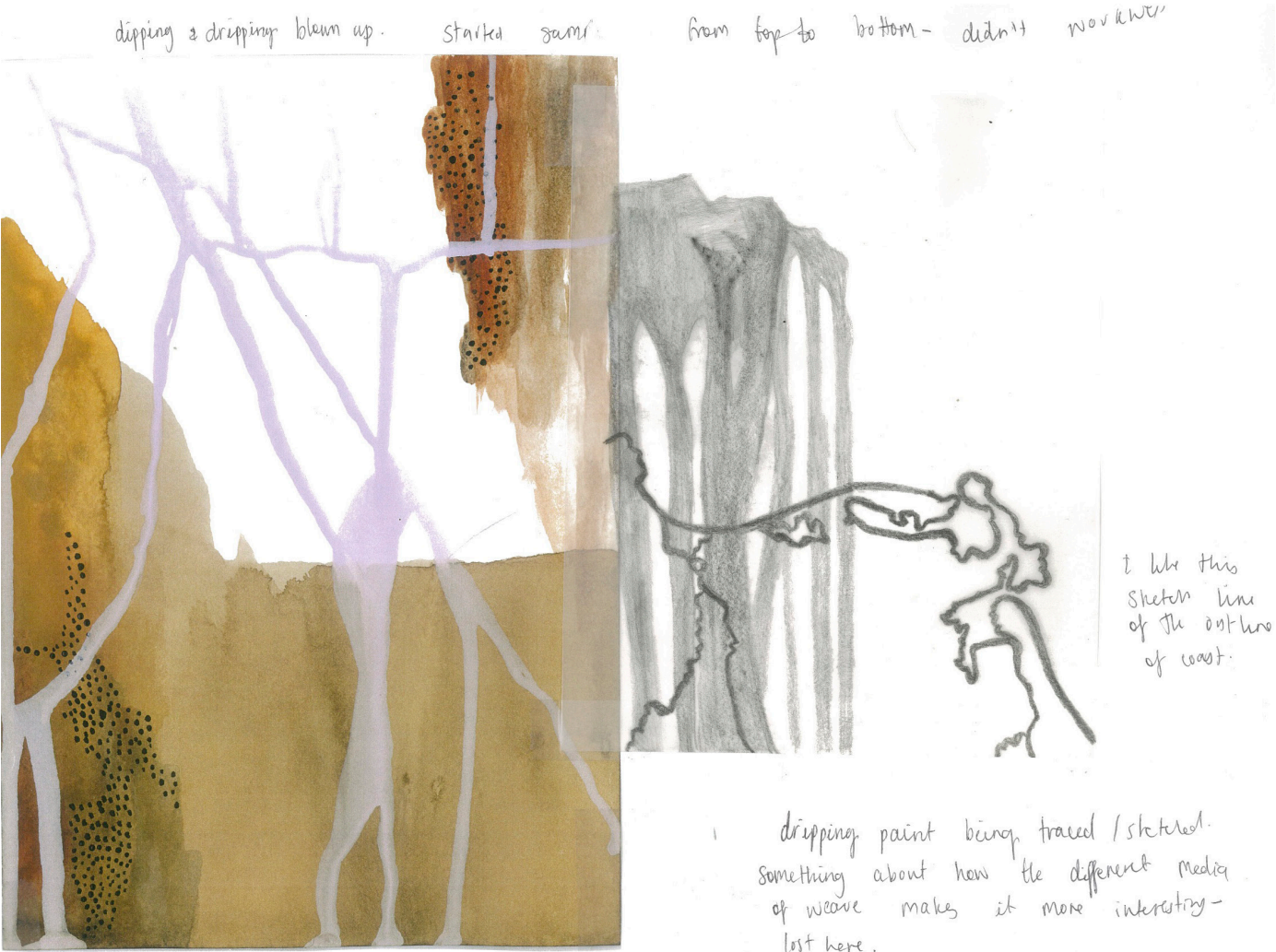


Figure 2. Workbook page exploring drawings of maps and movement.





Figure 3. Weaving on the AVL loom, Massey University Wellington, 2018.

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to Wool Yarns NZ for the Jim Woods Memorial Scholarship. Thank you to my supervisors Dr. Sandy Heffernan, and Dr. Faith Kane for your knowledge, support, and guidance, without which the pathways researched this year would not have stretched as far or as wide. Thank you to Dr. Caroline Campbell and the wider Massey University community for your feedback, encouragement and ideas. And lastly, thank you to my family, friends and the MESS crew, for keeping me motivated, caffeinated, and reassured.



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Figure 4. My familys farm in Fairfax, 2017.



# Introduction: Mapping the Journey



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46°12'46.3"S 168°02'18.7"E –  
Fairfax and the family farm

I grew up on my family's small 200-acre sheep farm in Fairfax, Western Southland. Working on the farm is my parents' livelihoods, and as kids we grew up helping out with the seasonal work that was involved with farming sheep. For me wool was always at the centre; I recall days spent in the shearing shed helping to sort the fleeces after they are shorn, still warm and dirty with grease. These were then pressed into bales to be sold. This first step in the journey of wool production also marked the first step for me into a pathway that would lead to my study of textile design. Wool was always very important, and woollen jumpers were passed down through generations, to keep warm in the southern winters. This was where my passion for wool and textiles started, dabbling in knitting, felting, and weaving from a young age.

The background to this research is my past year of undergraduate study, a Bachelor of Design with Honours. My research was based on the old woolsheds from the countryside. I developed a rich body of imagery, with the missing panels of roofing, timber boards, and the beautiful decay of the sheds which were worn with age. My main process was translating the geometrics and shafts of light into tapestry weave. Using woven patterns, I was able to create both block patterns, as well as one off images within the cloth. This confirmed my enjoyment for the AVL loom and weave as a technique and is the reason I have used weave as my main process in the work presented in this research project.



Figure 7. The sheep on the farm in Fairfax, 2017.



# The current landscape of wool

Two events which impacted my thinking were the Wool Innovation Day in Christchurch and Wool Expo in Wellington . These experiences made me aware of the gap in the New Zealand Market for crossbred wool. In Wellington during the Wool Expo, Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor told the crowd of the virtues of wool, followed by the problems that the industry is currently faced with; "Under siege from animal rights groups and out-competed by synthetic products, the coarse wool sector is in crisis" (as cited in Hutching, 2018). He expressed the importance of promoting wool to be a sustainable and valuable product and the need for changes in the sector.

O'Connor advocated for farmers to be paid more for their product and for promoting wool as good for the environment, as synthetic fabrics are continuing to dominate the marketplace. He compared the marketing of a baby covered in a crude oil derived product (to represent the manufacture and use of synthetic material) with the image of a baby cuddling a woolly lamb (to describe the impact and merits of wool). This sparked my interest, as I saw a need to respond to this perceived lack of understanding of people from outside the industry.

The Wool Innovation day was a part of the W3 Wool Unleashed PGP program through of Ministry for Primary Industries. As according to Ministry of Primary Industries (2018), "Wool Unleashed (W3) aims to deliver premiums for New Zealand's strong wool sector. Premiums will come from applying a customer-led approach to wool production and processing to develop products that align with customer preferences".

Wool Expo hosted in Wellington by Federated Farmers and Ministry for Primary industries. As reviewed by Hutching, 2018 in NZFarmer.

Coming from a farming background I understand the value of wool and the care taken both with the animals and the land. By highlighting local production through place and material, I intend to create a provocation that describes the value I have for farming and wool, to share with my audience. I intend to return to the origin of the farm and describe aspects of the place that I find show the most authenticity - highlighting an aspect of the wool industry that is otherwise overlooked, and provoking people to see the value of this fibre.

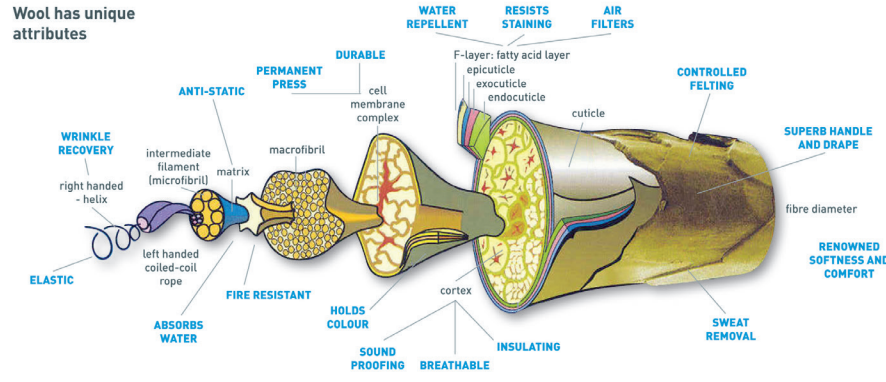


Figure 8. International Wool and Textile Organization. (n.d.). *Wool has unique attributes*. [Digital diagram]. Retrieved from <http://www.iwto.org/wool>

Unlike the crossbred wool sector, the New Zealand merino industry has been able to market merino wool as a premium product by linking merino wool to place. An example of this is New Zealand Merino's brand partner, Icebreaker-who produce outdoor merino clothing. Icebreaker has placed emphasis on the traceability and transparency of products right back to the growers and on the farm, and animal welfare ethos. They provide people with a connection to, and a better understanding of the of their clothing. This elevates Icebreaker as a premium brand as they are able to provide a rich story of place to their consumers. Craig Adams New Zealand Merino senior procurement manager, argues that crossbred wool is already a great product and it is important to find ways of showing this to the consumer. Stating that, "they're [consumers]



Figure 9.Icebreaker. (2018). [Untitled image of map of growers]. Retrieved from <https://nz.icebreaker.com/en/our-story/growers.html>

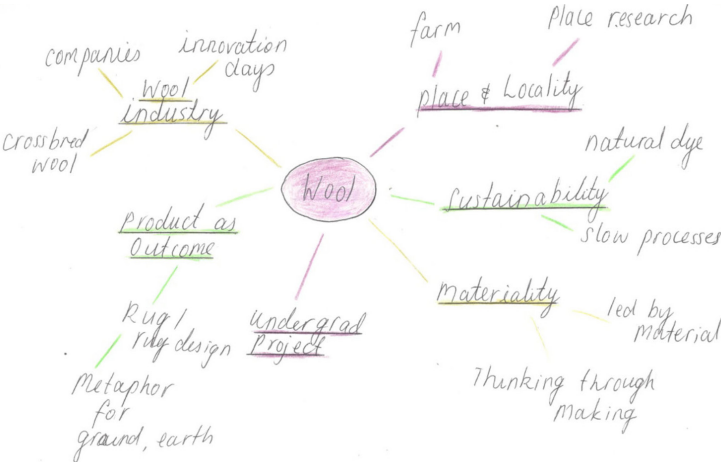


Figure 10. Brainstorm map of the initial direction of the project with wool at the centre.

Thinking about the current landscape of wool in New Zealand is where I have initially situated my research project. By taking the *thinking through making* approach, I have allowed wool as a material to guide me to delve much deeper into the study of a single place. This in turn has highlighted ideas of localism and sustainable slow design processes. My aim for the final woven provocation is for it to act as a metaphor to explore and show the pattern, movement and expanse of the farmland. This final will fit into the framework of slow design, as the overarching theme and goal of slow design is to be a provocation both for designers and individuals to evaluate and reflect on their design methods, ideas, and objects and the quality of these in order to push towards more sustainable alternatives (Strauss & Fuad-Luke, 2009).





Figure 11. Sheep tracks on the edge of one of the farms gully areas. Fairfax, 2017.

“Intimate responses to locality within the immensities of landscape”.

-(Flint, n.d.).



Figure 12. Drawing taken from workbook exploring movement of paint, maps, and pattern.



# Literature Review: Place as Metaphor

## Place in current design practice

Australian textile artist India Flint has locality and sustainability at the core of her practice. Flint creates eco-prints using Australian wool, and eucalyptus. On her website, Flint states: “[W]hen eucalyptus leaves are gathered and used in Australia, they are indeed an ecologically sustainable dye source. [H]owever, when imported from another country they are not. - if declaring your work as “sustainable” it's important to use plants available in the bio-region of the dye studio” (Flint, n.d.). Flint links these ideas of place, sustainability, and material to her design. By doing this her textiles present a strong connection to the locality of their production, celebrating sustainable and local processes. The way Flint relates natural dye to the true locality of place further emphasises the sustainability of this process, in terms of using what is in abundance and what is in a close proximity to the practitioner.



In April 2018 The Manchester School of Art and the Whitworth Museum hosted a Textiles and Place conference. The aim of the conference was to draw upon and explore the past histories of Manchester itself, as well as relay contemporary narratives and associations with textiles linked to place. In the conference call for papers they state: “Textile as a socially dynamic, communicative and active material offers a rich seam of enquiry into how textiles participates and influences how we live. This conference seeks to examine how textiles connects with the idea of place in its histories, its production, [and] sustainable future ecologies [ . . . ]” (Manchester School of Art, 2018). This quote shows that within design, the idea of place is an active research area, and that textiles, place, and sustainable futures are inherently interconnected. Textiles have potential to act as a catalyst to draw out these connections and show the importance of textile as material, place, and sustainability within design.

Another open exhibition celebrating the importance of place is the Craft Biennale Scotland . The exhibition called for entries of ‘Response to Place’ for artwork, “That contributes to individual identity or nationality, and ways in which we create and express our ‘place’ in the world” (Craft Biennale

The craft biennale Scotland exhibition was scheduled for May- July 2018, and I entered my undergraduate work which was short-listed- until the exhibition was regrettably cancelled due to lack of funding. This would have been an opportunity to express place in a textile form, as well as celebrate the process, and act of crafting the design.

Scotland, 2017). As with both conference calls, I intend to contribute to this discussion around textiles and place by drawing out the connections within my own locality and place of the farm. Through the metaphor of woven material, I aim to highlight local production and our connections to place through notions of sustainability and slow design.

Considering these current opportunities adds value to the research I have undertaken in this project, as the conference calls show that the study of place in relation to textiles and sustainability is a topical field of exploration. This is important in situating where my work will sit alongside current practitioners and researchers. I hope to add another layer to this narrative, and in doing so, show deeper connections to the land I am from, promoting sustainability.

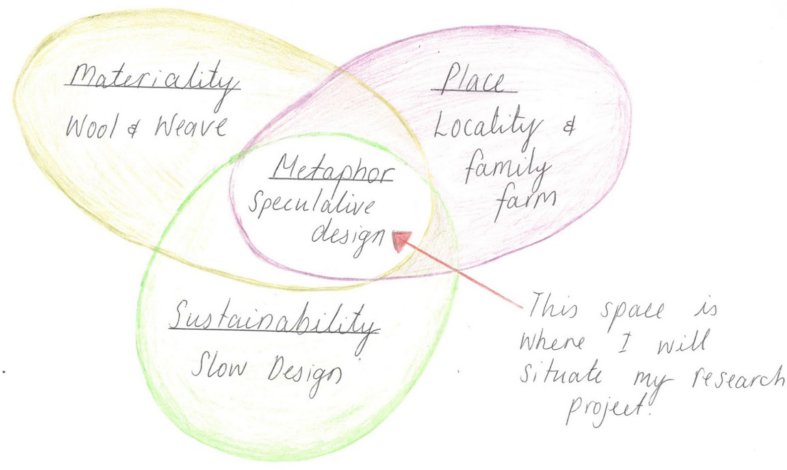


Figure 15. Diagram showing where I will situate my project having narrowed down the scope of the project.

## Defining Place

As place has become a key focus for this research project, I will define what this means to me as a designer and to current practitioners using place as a concept in their design practice. Human Geographer Tim Cresswell describes place in the most basic terms: “[Places] are all spaces people are attached to in one way or another. This is the most straightforward and common meaning of place – a meaningful location” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7). Cresswell references historian John Agnew's definition of the meaning of place in three main categories; location, local, and sense of place. Location refers to the physical location of a place, such as coordinates of a map, whereas local references the material setting and social aspects of a place, and the shape of the place where people can interact and conduct their lives. The third category, sense of place, refers to the subjective and emotional attachment that people have to place. This can be in real life or other formats, to evoke a sense of place, and the feeling that the user knows what it would be like to *be there* (Cresswell, 2004).

To highlight the sense of place on the farm I have developed woven techniques, drawing upon the characteristics that can best act as a metaphor for this place. I believe that this is important because building deeper connections to the places we inhabit and the land we come from creates a sense of understanding around how we can be more sustainable as designers and as consumers.

16 Figures 13 & 14. Flint, I. (n.d.). *What happens when plants and water are heated in conjunction with cloth.* [Natural dye coloured wool]. Retrieved from <http://www.indiaflint.com/page7.htm>



Cresswell continues to discuss that the terms landscape, space and place can be intermixed and used in conjunction with each other, or as separate aspects of geography. As separate definitions, landscape refers to a location that is being viewed from the outside in, where the viewer is not inside or apart of the space, but looking at it from afar. Space can be defined as an area or location which someone has no connection to; often, spaces can be described to become places when they are interacted with by humans - an example being how one moves into a new room and would often describe it as a new space, until they move in all their personal belongings and it would then become their place (Cresswell, 2004). Space also has connotations to movement and expanse, which directly relate to the geography and topographical layout of the farm. These definitions of place suggest a physical location or site, whether that be real, imagined, a space with human interaction or connection. This is how the disciplines of geography, architecture and planning may define the notion of place; however to philosophers, place is a way of being in the world, and relates more to human interactions within a place and cultural phenomena rather than a physical location (Cresswell, 2004).

# Patterns and movement

The dusty gravel road, the tracks and tree lines in the paddocks, and the gullies of the farm provide a deep sense of place to me and my family. However, an outsider who is perhaps driving past might see something different, such as a large expanse of green paddocks, and not much else.

Pattern, expanse, and movement are key terms that relate to the land and what I want to say about this place through textiles. The way the sheep are moved from paddock to paddock, creating patterns in the grass as they walk, as well as the familiar pattern of how they are moved season after season describe the connection to the place, both human and animal. The map and geography of the farm create a sense of the familiar for myself, and symbolise my mental image of rural Southland.

Cresswell and Merriman describe how patterns and movements are interrelated (2011). An example is the way that rivers cause paths along the land, just as the certain contours of the land provide direction to rivers. Merriman quotes Halprin's description of this relationship, which extends to manmade aspects of space. Halprin's description of motorways relates to some of the imagery taken from the farm; "freeways in the countryside, with their graceful sinuous, curvilinear patterns, are like great free flowing paintings in which, through participation, the sensations of motion through space are experienced" (as cited in Cresswell & Merriman, 2011, p 109).

This project is about showing deeper connections to the land that we own and work on. My aim is to create a woven metaphor exploring and showing the pattern, movement and expanse of the farmland discovered in my exploration of the site. This will contribute to the authenticity of using wool from New Zealand, celebrate locality and slow textile processes with the ultimate goal to contribute to the shift towards sustainability.

“As is the case of water, a living stream of sheep moulds and adapts itself to the lie of the land.”

- (Guthrie-Smith, 1953, p. 181).



Figure 16. Drone footage capturing sheep being moved from one paddock to the next, showing movement and pattern. Fairfax 2017.



# Maps and pathways

When I look at a map, I am often drawn to tracing the lines and routes which represent the roads and coastlines that I find familiar. Perhaps this shows my human interaction with this space, creating a place for me within a map. Whereas when other people look at the map, they might not find the same path familiar - looking upon the topography as more of an open space.



Figure 17. [Untitled map 303 of Western Southland area]. (n.d.). (no further information available).

In her research *Land Matters* (2011), geographer and artist Liz Wells defines the differences between the terms landscape, place, and space in much the same way as Cresswell (2004). Landscape is defined as a site that is viewed, while the verb landscaping is used to describe human interaction with nature in the activities of architecture, gardening and planning. As noted by Wells, landscapes involve a spectator outside of that which is viewed (2011). Interestingly, she defines space as an area that has not yet been explored, such as outer space or a void, and place as a more familiar location, suggesting that space becomes a place after human interaction. This interaction can come in many forms, one of which is the simple naming of a place. “The act of naming is the act of taming [. . .] naming turns space into place” (Wells, 2011, p. 3). I found this definition of place interesting, leading me back to the idea of mapped places, because map coordinates and place names are both ways that space has become place. Wells also says that “history turns space into a place” (Wells, 2011, p. 19). My description of the place I grew up relates to the period of my own personal history, but a broader definition could include the earlier history of the area.

Maps include notions of pathways, which convey the idea of movement and how the space is used. Maps of the countryside give a literal view of expanse, uninhabited areas being depicted as flat colour. Sometimes a key to the side of the map provides symbols to represent trees, grass, or water. Anthropologist Tim Ingold says that maps encode beliefs or propositions about the locations of places and objects that are true, or taken to be true, where one is positioned in the world (Ingold, 2000).

He goes on to quote scholar Alfred Gell to define a map as “Any system of spatial knowledge and or beliefs which takes the form of non-token-indexical statements about the spatial locations of places and objects” (as cited by Ingold, 2000, p. 223). This is in contrast to photograph or drawn images which show what the land looks like from a certain position. The view can change as you move across the space, but the underlying map remains the same. Photographs of the pathways and patterns made on the land of the farm, the land area map, and aerial video footage all capture aspects of movement, pattern and expanse, which contribute to the sense of place of the farm.

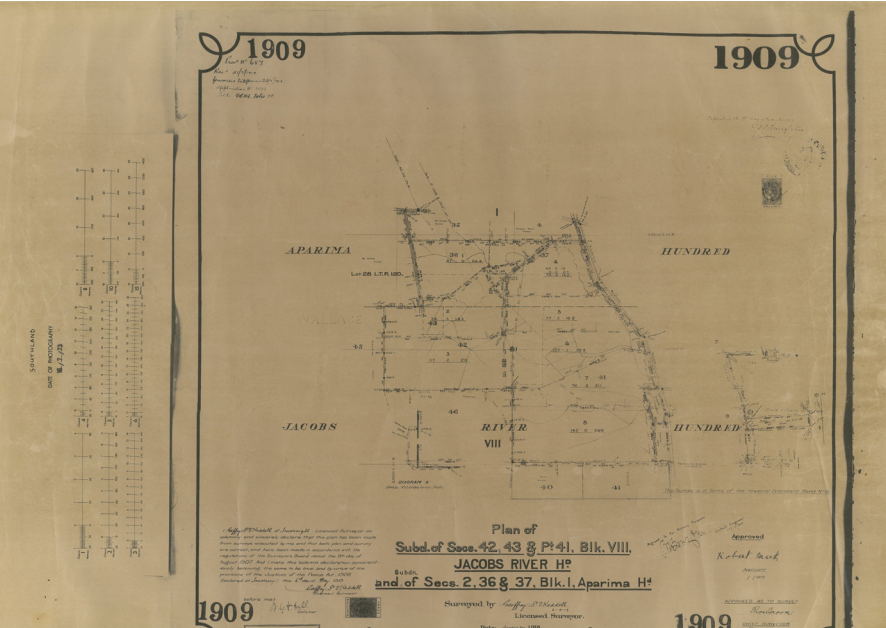


Figure 18. Map of Jacobs river. (1909). [no further information available].

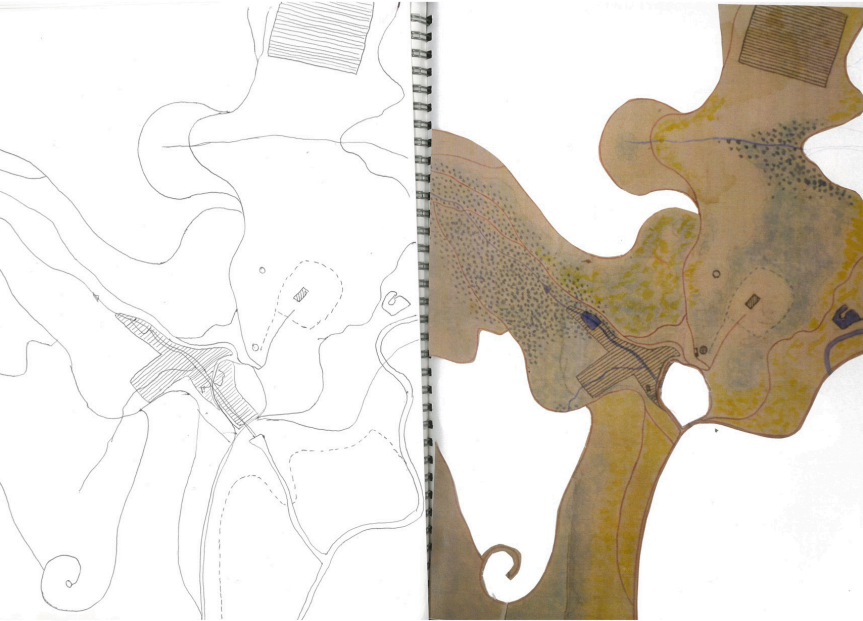


Figure 19. Pages taken from a work book showing initial map research and drawings.



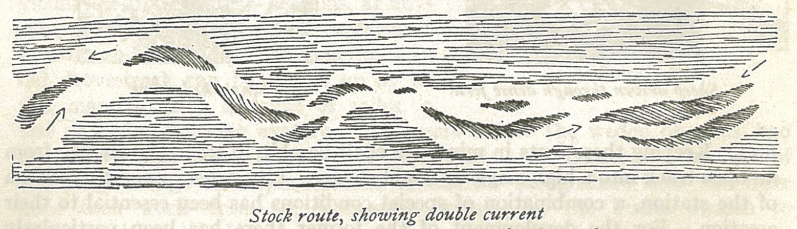
# Identity

Place fundamentally has a key relationship to identity in current design practice. Understanding one’s own identity is inextricably related to one’s place, culture, and community. Michael Godkin uses the term “rootedness”, to describe the feeling of identity that can be associated to a place. This can exist both in terms of one person’s subjective feelings of a place, or that of a whole community (as cited in Buttimer & Seamans, 1980). This relates to my research of the farm. My decision to delve into the place of the farm in the first instance, was due to my personal identity, or as Godkin describes “rootedness” with it as a place. Likewise, Wells states that: “Place plays a key role within identity, both actual place and imagined place” (Wells, 2011, p. 54). Wells describes that landscapes, weather real or imagined, of where a person is from, “feed our sense of belonging to whatever place, region, or nation that we view as homeland” (Wells, 2011, p. 54). My sense of the place I am from has had a strong link to my identity as a designer as I believe having such a relationship to place in my research, brings a deeper level of understanding and connection to my work.

As with my own human interaction and the sense of place with the farm, the same is true for the livestock that graze its pastures. The farm is home to around 1,500 sheep who have their own system of pathways and ways of moving through and across the space. As detailed by Guthrie-Smith in his in-depth investigation of *Tutira*, a historic sheep station in the Hawkes Bay, it is the sheep that first survey the land and create tacks and pathways.

He elaborates: “Viewed from above and afar, a great travelling drove will, on levels, break into countless shallow, rapid, irregular channels; it will pour itself in masses through choked defiles” (Guthrie-Smith, 1953, p.181). The imagery of these pathways is akin to the imagery of the flow of water down the gullies and over the roads.

Guthrie- Smith’s in-depth study eloquently describes the intricacies of the stations geography, flora, fauna and histories; recounting everything from past station owners and earthquakes in the area to fishing spots and the eventual straightening of the horse and sheep made paths over time. The way the single station is placed under the microscope, so to speak, is a relevant case study for the way I too am delving into the many layers of the farm. Guthrie-Smiths product of this investigation remains a lasting snapshot of place and time, in the form of his book. My research display’s the investigation of the farm in Fairfax in another way- it uses weaving as a metaphor to produce a pathway woven to imbue the study of the farm with each intertwining of warp and weft.



*Stock route, showing double current*  
Figure 20. Guthrie- Smith, H. (1956). Stock route, showing double current. [Ink drawing].  
In Guthrie- Smith, H. (1953). Tutira: The story of a New Zealand sheep station. London, England: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd.

“How do we choose our specific material, our means of communication? “Accidentally.” Something speaks to us, a sound, a touch, hardness or softness, it catches us and asks us to be formed”.

- (Albers, 2000, Pg 74).



Figure 21. Close up of tapestry weave sample depicting dripping paint.



# Metaphor

Anni Albers is one of the most well-known textile artists of the 20th century, renowned both for her weaving and her literature on design. Albers describes the connection between the weaver and the material, and how even subconsciously the material will speak for itself and act as a metaphor for the thoughts or feelings that the weaver is trying to get across; "Ideas flow from it to us and though we feel to be the creator we are involved in a dialogue with our medium. The more subtly we are tuned to our medium, the more inventive our actions will become" (Albers, 2000, p.74).

For me, this is about the thinking through making approach; seeing, feeling, and critically analyzing what techniques and processes work well and show imagery and the feeling of place, then taking the successful concept forward through to design. Albers ends on stating: "What I am trying to get across is that material is a means of communication. That listening to it, not dominating it makes us truly active, that is: to be active be passive" (Albers, 2000, p.75). The final material of the woven pathway acts as a means of communication, a manifestation of that which has come before it, to show the aspects of the farm that I think are important to its sense of place.

Following on from Albers, artist Shelia Hicks also understood the deep relationship to both weaving as a material and as a metaphor. Hicks first studied with Albers, and this was where she first saw woven cloth as something more than utilitarian and realized that material could function as an art form itself.

In her early work Hicks used a small frame as a loom which she took everywhere as she travelled. Describing her work as more site responsive, she wove a series of small pieces as a kind of travel diary for the places she was seeing, showing the aspects that she found interesting. These pieces, although small, show a deep connection to place through her range of colour and texture variations (Danto & Simon, 2006).

The way Hicks was able to describe these new places she was travelling to through her material creates an interesting portfolio of work. The aspects that she decided to show in her pieces were what were important to her in order to create lasting impression of that place. This is much the same as how I describe the farm through weaving. Someone else may have a different view of what is important to them to show, but as this is through my own study and experience of place, in some ways it is very subjective much like the work of Shelia Hicks.

Both Albers and Hicks have influenced my notions of material being used as a metaphor, and their artwork and weaving itself is referenced particularly in my early samples. The way that both artists blur the line between craft and art and often use novel ways to weave their pieces, opting for floats of warp being left exposed, and different colors of weft being used with aspects of tapestry weave, has been taken forward into my work.

In particular the secondary weft that Albers has added in some of her pieces reminds me of a pathway stretching across the weave, a small piece of yarn that could be described as wriggling up the cloth. I have sampled this technique and re-created small sections of it in my final weave to reference these pathways and to add sections of detail and pattern. This can be seen in the below image of *Intersecting*, (Albers, 1962).

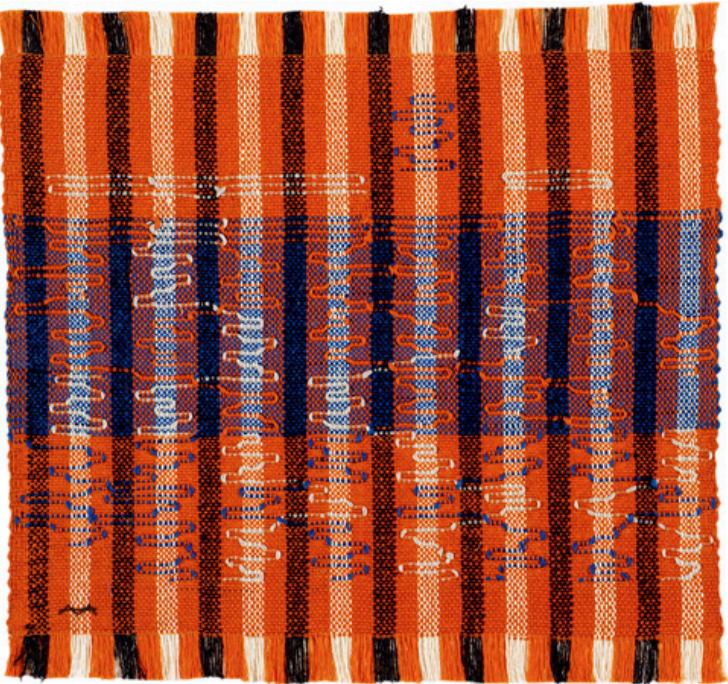


Figure 22. Albers, A. (1962). *Intersecting* [Cotton and rayon, 40 x 41.9cm]. Retrieved from <http://www.albersfoundation.org/art/anni-albers/weavings/#slide7>



Figures 23- 25. Samples where I have attempted to recreate imagery from artist model in my weaving.



The way the land has rolling hills and curved valleys creating grooves in the earth reminds me of Hicks' work that has curved sections of tapestry weave and a beautiful abstraction of a landscape view within them. I created samples using a hand-held comb to beat down sections of warp into curved and irregular patterns, often leaving sections of exposed warp as seen in Hicks' work. By not using the beater on the loom I was able to create shapes and textures that were outside of the horizontal and vertical warp and weft that are made when weaving. Examples of this can be seen in the following images of *Zapallar*, made in Zapallar, Chile, 1957 (Danto & Simon, 2006, p. 85). As well as *Frog Pond*, made in Umpawagu, Connecticut, 1989 (Danto & Simon, 2006, p. 269).



Figure 26. Sample where I have attempted to recreate imagery from artist model in my weaving.

“Sun-soaked clusters of cadmium orange and rose cling to the rocky coast. Light filters through the vertical openings of Twisted stems raked by ocean breezes” (as cited in Danto & Simon, 2006, p. 84).

Figure 27. Hicks, S. (1957). *Zapallar* [Wool, 23.5 x 12cm].  
In Danto, C., & Simon, J. (2006). *Shelia Hicks: Weaving as a Metaphor*. New York, USA: Yale University Press, New Haven and London.



“Emerald green seeps into saturated blue and covers yellow ochre warp. Lily pads float on the pond and amply shade the aquatic under-world” (as cited in Danto & Simon,

Figure 28. Hicks, S. (1989). *Frog Pond* [Cotton, silk, and wool, 25.5 x 14cm].  
In Danto, C., & Simon, J. (2006). *Shelia Hicks: Weaving as a Metaphor*. New York, USA: Yale University Press, New Haven and London.



The physical act of weaving itself can also be used metaphorically. The warp and weft and the weaving of the two together are often used to describe the bringing together of two things, or the fabrication of something. As Danto & Simon reference, Aristotle uses weaving as a metaphor to describe the fabrication of community, and how all of the separate threads of life need to be woven together to create a stable society (2006). There is also a certain similarity in the way in which the cloth is methodically woven, using the hands in a technique that has not changed much in the thousands of years since it began. The physical act of weaving can provide a meditative state of mind, with the shuttle passing under and over, in repetition with the lifting and falling of warp threads. This same repetition can be observed when one is working on the land. Farm work is seasonal, with the same tasks being repeated at the same time each year in a very hands-on profession. The way a farmer knows what is right for their land and animals is a skill acquired over years of repetition and learning, and that can be related to the skilled hands of an experienced weaver.

The first vision for my final outcome was to be a woven rug design. The idea of this came from the concept that a rug would act as a metaphor for place, land, and the earth. Both because rugs can historically be culturally significant to the place they are made in terms of material and associated skills (MacDonald, 2010), and also because a rug lies on the floor and by standing on it, this would give a literal metaphor for the land beneath our feet, and place. Using a rug as the base, I wanted to develop a metaphor for the pathway imagery that was being reflected in my explorations.

One historical rug design which has this pathway idea interlaced into a rug is the tent band rug. This was used as the flooring for the tents of the nomadic people of northern India, where the pathway woven into the rug may have been used as a kind of division to what used to be in the tents, perhaps for religious reasons (Walker, 1998). The way that this rug has corners and bands along the pathways they must have walked in the tent has made me consider putting a corner or curve in my woven piece. I thought that this could further show that this is referencing a pathway and will also be more of a novel form, rather than just a runner of sorts. This was the first response to what the final outcome could be, and through the thinking through making methodology and critical analysis of my samples, this developed into a pathway provocation.



Figure 29. *Yomut Turkmen all-pile Yolami tent band*. (ca.1800). [Wool, 1378 x 36 cm].  
In Walker, D. (1998). *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era*. London, England: Thames and Hudson Ltd.





Figures 30- 32. Durability samples when studying rug composition. Showing double cloth variations, twill variations, and the use of thicker yarn.

“Hands feel. They probe. They practice. They give us, as in good common sense, which otherwise seems to be missing lately.”

-(McCullough, 1996, pg 1)



Figures 33-34. Using the AVL for tapestry weave, showing the way my hands must pass the shuttle back and forth under the cloth. Massey University Wellington, 2018.





# Methodology: Embodiment of Method

My hands are my most valuable tool for weaving. The loom assists the warp threads to rise and fall, creating a shed of space for me to pass under the shuttle and layer threads on the weft. Under and over the woolen threads interlace, slowly building, to create a length of woven cloth. Different lift plans can be used to create variations on the simple under and over structure, and likewise different shuttles of color can be passed hand to hand through the warp to interlace more intricate patterns and imagery.

My hands feel and adjust the tension, they contest the texture of the cloth and habitually realign the cross-sticks to ensure the formation of the warp through the loom. My hands check and fix broken threads, tying them together with equal tension to the rest of the warp. My hands wind cranks, they lift weights, they thread each singular warp thread through the eyes of the heddles. Weaving for me is an expression of myself both physically and mentally. Weaving helps me to understand the concepts behind my development, and the process often leads the way in terms of my research. I allow and encourage the physical process of this work, alongside my drawing, to inform and guide the direction of the project.

Such an approach allows for a more creative and authentic approach to designing (The Design Academy Eindhoven, 2016). The idea of thinking-through-making is part of the main system of learning at the Design Academy Eindhoven, where they have developed a lexicon of ideas and phrases

mapping design research. As quoted from their website: "But the thinking must not be separated from the making, thinking-through-making is how we at Design Academy Eindhoven describe the process in which making and thinking, the material and the discursive are interrelated and alternate back and forth all the time" (Design Academy Eindhoven, 2016). Thinking through making design development is led by material interaction with a more open mind as to what the final outcome will be. The design development begins with mapping, drawing, making samples, and trials, as well as a reflection of these, meaning that the critical analysis of the iterations is what informs the next samples, and over all the final outcome. "Reflection means establishing distance to the design researcher's activities, examining the decisions which have been made, and revisiting the actions taken" (The Design Academy Eindhoven, 2016).

This design process relates to my project as weaving is a hands-on and tactile technique. Both my previous knowledge stemming from my undergraduate degree, as well as knowledge acquired from the trials and samples were key in shaping my final outcome and creating a skillful piece. Professor and architect Malcom McCullough talks about the importance of the handmade in his book *Abstracting Craft* (1996). In the aptly titled chapter: *Hands are Underrated*, McCullough discusses the importance of hands as a tool for designers, when selecting materials, skill, and with the physical act of creating both functional, and beautiful pieces. McCullough states, "The

knowledge is not only physical, but also experiential. The way of hands is personal, contextual, indescribable" (McCullough, 1996, p. 1). As my final outcome is for exhibition, rather than for the consumer marketplace, it was important to be as creative and start as broad as possible when researching the farm, and I believe the thinking through making methodology was the best way to do this, "Learning through the hands shapes creativity itself" (McCullough, 1996, p. 1).

As well as the physicality of weaving, colour was sourced by the labour of my hands picking and sorting through vegetation. My hands developed large gestural drawings to act as cartoons of my tapestry weave. I applied colour with syringes, dipping, pouring and drawing lines and patterns. My body established the confinements by which I could weave - which, together with the restrictions of the farm area, ultimately acted as a kind of brief to my study. The visual material was documented in a series of workbooks and photos and the continued development, iteration and reflection of my samples and drawings was critical to the thinking through making method and gave direction to my aesthetic and conceptual growth. This critical analysis and reflection ultimately led me to resolve the final outcome of the pathway.

The creative process of using making as a form of thinking can be linked to craft, and the act of crafting. McCullough defines craft as the name, "given to any profession that requires the use of the hands and is limited to a certain number of mechanical operations to produce the same piece of work, made over and over again" (McCullough, 1996, p. 14). Another book; *40 under 40: Craft Futures*, showcases 40 contemporary designers, whose work falls under the modern category of craft (Bell, 2012).

In the chapter on trace and light, Bernard Herman uses the term "residue of process", to describe the way the craftsman's process is embodied in the finished object itself (as cited in Bell, 2012). He discusses both the process of crafting and the importance of this, alongside the outcome itself, describing this as a residue of process. "We encounter craft as act and action, the dynamic process of making things ranging from the moment of design through the realization of the physical object" (as cited in Bell, 2012, p. 51). Through this research project I intend to display the residue of process that is shown through the embodiment of tapestry weaving in order to create opportunity for dialogue surrounding the provocations manufacture and the processes that have been used.

One way that the trace of my process is shown is through the width of my final piece. Initially the piece was to be a larger rug, as a metaphor of the ground and earth of the farm as described earlier. However, my hands must be able to pass underneath the warp and pass the shuttle to and from each other, in order to create the tapestry weave. In this instance, my hands and the limitations of my physical body were what caused me to create a thinner runner style piece. This shows residue of the weaving by hand process. I have likened the end width to that of a pathway, to act as a metaphor for some of the geography and pattern shown on the farm and a metaphor for the journey I have followed. As the piece began as a more conventional rug and has critiqued into the concept of a pathway, this has added to the shift away from the consumer and practical space, towards being an exhibition, with the concepts of place, process and metaphor being shown in the form of a provocation.



Another limitation and residue of sampling process in terms of the rug approach is the weight of the woven cloth as rug designs employ a much thicker yarn density in order to create durable furnishings. As this research project is more about developing a metaphor and expanding my research knowledge of locality and place, it is more important for the final outcome to act as a provocation, rather than a commercially viable product at this point. I have created samples in thicker density weaving by employing a felt backing on the tapestries, using different lifting plans such as twill, using a thicker slubbed yarn as the weft, creating a double cloth, and felting the samples. However, I felt that as the piece is for an exhibition, it was better to use the finer wool to depict imagery then compromise this by using thicker yarn that would have been more durable. For my final design I have woven with both the finer lamb's wool and the chunkier slubbed wool as my weft, and used a twill variation as this produces a more medium weight cloth and introduces a slight zig-zag to the texture reflecting the pathways and lines across the land, as a smaller and subtle undertone.

In the chapter object lessons, of *40 under 40* (Bell, 2012), Michael Prokopow goes on to discuss that contemporary craft is contrary to the traditional approach to craft and is instead presented in novel forms and “surprising things” (as cited in Bell, 2012, p. 63). This describes that contemporary craft reaches different outcomes from that of the traditional, and justifies the way that my outcome could perhaps be described as a little more unconventional. One practitioner who presents their designs in novel and oftentimes surprising forms is Dutch designer, Hella Jongerius.

Jongerius' research on colour and textiles explores the idea that process and imperfection are important to her method of designing, often times leaving open ended stated on her website *Jongeriuslab*. “The unfinished, the provisional, the possible – they hide in the attention for imperfections, traces of the creation process, and the revealed potential of materials and techniques” (n.d.). Jongerius is able to convey the value of the process, and material through her work. This is important in the shift towards sustainability and consumer responsibility, as often consumers are unaware where or how their textile products such as clothing are made. Through this research project, I intend to introduce the idea of the unfinished and to invite the audience to connect with this process. The pathway metaphor of my final outcome describes the journey of my research project and invites the viewer to reflect and discuss slow textile processes and the sustainability of locality and wool. The open-ended nature of my final outcome, being a pathway, expresses the possibilities of what path it could lead to next, in the same way as Jongerius' designs.



Figure 35. Natural dyed yarn ready to be woven.

# Process



Figures 36- 37. Photos of my studio workspace. Massey University Wellington, 2018.





# Movement

I began by the gathering of visual data from the farm such as photos, drawings and site research from the local Museum and surrounding areas. What I was most drawn to was the pathways, both the geological - of the gullies, hills and streams - and also the manmade bike tracks, roads, fence lines, the paths the livestock create when walking over the land and our own footprints. The paths created patterns, which showed movement across the expansive land. This imagery was furthered when I came across some old maps of the area, passed down from the previous owners of the farm, and also through drone video taken of the site.

I furthered my map imagery by looking at more old maps online as well as current maps. I began to trace out the lines and to extract patterns and textures from these maps. The pathways are what really appealed to me, and what I felt connected with the idea of place and sense of place, as I was able to trace these pathways with a sense of meaning, whereas most people would look at a map of the area with the opinion that it is a wide space. They described Wells “naming is taming” concept (Wells, 2011), by giving names and coordinates to the land.

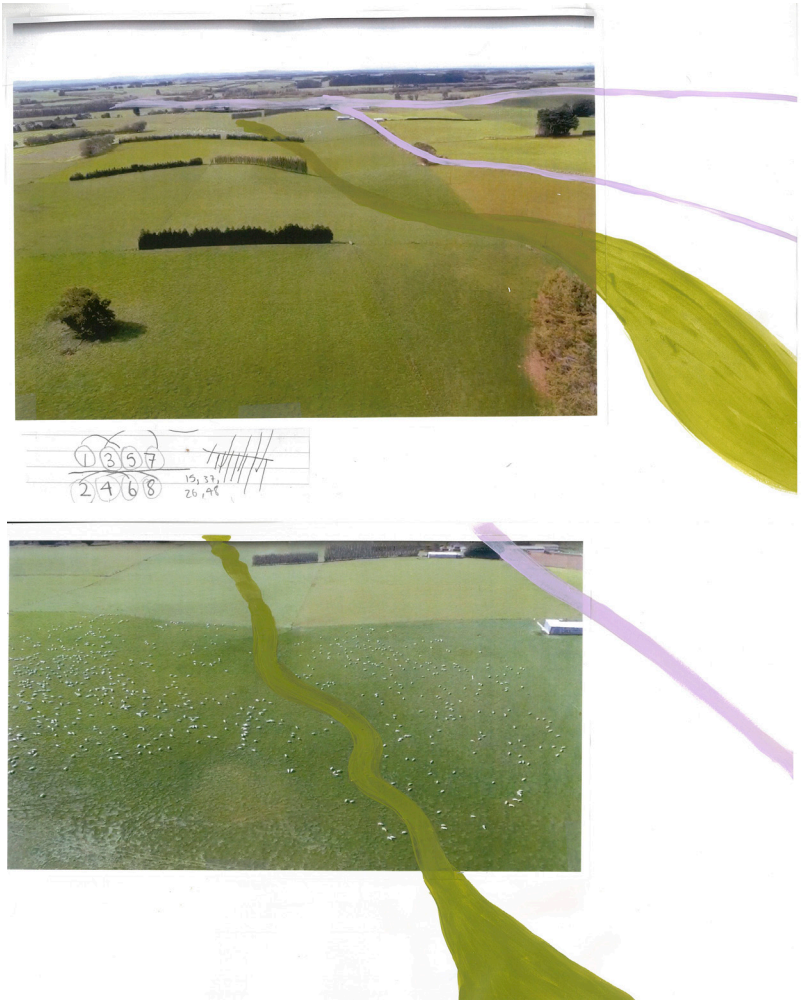


Figure 38 - 39. Imagery from drone of the farm printed and painted over to show movement of water across the space.

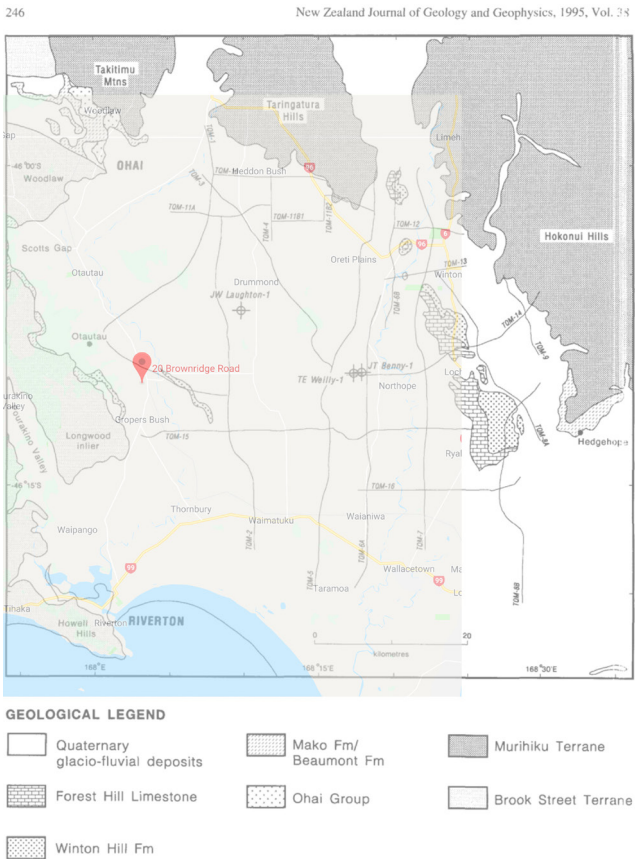


Fig. 2 Outcrop geology, seismic coverage, and petroleum exploration wells in the Winton Basin.

Figure 40. Cahill, J. P. (1995). *Outcrop geology, seismic coverage, and petroleum exploration wells in the Winton Basin* [Computer drawn diagram] . In Cahill, J. P. (1995). Evolution of the Winton Basin, Southland, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Geology and Geophysics*, 38(2), 245-258  
Overlaid with Google Map Data. (2018). Map of Western Southland area. [Map of Western Southland New Zealand]. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/maps/@-46.2488986,167.721426,10.34z>

The farm also has a unique geology under the surface, as researched by NZ Petroleum. In 1963 a seismic reflection survey was collected from Fairfax, recorded on an irregular grid of local roads (Cahill, 1995). It is interesting that the map of this grid seems to indicate right up the road which lies between the farm as being a survey site. This produced findings of up to 2800 meters of tertiary sediment beneath the surface, as well as oil (Cahill, 1995). This reflects the intuitive response I had to drawing with liquid paint and dye, as there is liquid under the surface as well.

Movement was explored further by following the flow of the gully up and back down the farm with an aerial drone. The ability to capture this expanse, from a birds-eye view created a new perception of the land. The drone was able to capture the movement of the sheep going through to a new paddock and the moving image adds a level of depth rather than just looking at photos which capture a moment in time.



# Liquid/ Flow

The original colour palette was taken from the liquid palette in *Textile View Magazine* (2017). This colour palette was chosen due to its resonance to the liquid, flowing, pathway imagery I was developing from my study of the farm. Also because the colours within the palette, such as the browns, golds, greens, and purple reflected some of the colours that I was able to obtain from natural dye using plants from the farm.



Figure 41 & 42. Textile View Magazine. (2017). Liquid color palette.  
In Shah, D. (2017, Autumn). Liquid colour palette. *Textile View; Insight*(119), 110-111.

Through trailing a range of different media and mark making methods, I started dipping paper into ink, dye and watery paint, this created a sense of the space, as the colour soaked into the pages and found its own way into the paper. I liked the way that this reflected the lands hills and valleys, and the places where water would naturally settle. This led me to play with lines of the coastline closest to the farm, and pathways of the maps in different ways. Reflection of the drawings and samples I developed led me to analyse and critique what methods were working best, and then further explore these through different iterations. I began to use masking fluid and apply colour using watery paint in syringes, to create drips down the page, reflecting the movement of the pathways and roads on the maps. The ability to control this technique from the masking fluid was in response to the way in which the farm controls to some degree the nature of the farm with the fences sectioning the hills and gullies.



Figure 43. Exploration of the liquid/ flow concept with watery paint.



Figures 43- 46. Drawings exploring movement pattern and expanse with imagery from maps and drone footage of the farm.



# Natural dye

Hella Jongerius describes how we rarely appreciate how rich and complex colours can be, describing the current narrow view of colour as names and numbers on a colour chart of standardised pigment (Jongeriuslab, n.d.). My process shows the authentic colours of the farm through natural dye, as well as the labour involved with this technique. In her thesis *Colours of The High Country*, Kristy Jonstone describes the idea of a visual "terroir" to describe the natural dye colours obtained from place. As terroir is a term used in the wine industry to describe to how the location and climate of where the grapes are grown affects the taste of the wine (2012), Jonstone similarly describes natural dye outcomes to be embedded with the sense of place unique to



Figures 47 - 49. Mint and blackberry used to dye yarn.

their origins and she suggests that "distinct colours can be obtained from an individual place" (Jonstone, 2012, p. 26). By using natural dye from plants found on farm, this reveals colour specific to the location and climate of the Fairfax. The natural dye recipes and methods were based on my knowledge gained in my undergraduate degree of study, as well as a handbook *Natural Dye* by Dominique Cardon (2007).

Deep walnut brown, bright yellow from Queen Anne's lace, and lavender purple were a few of the hues I was able to obtain. However, I decided to simplify my dying and focus on two main plants, mint and blackberry because they both grow in abundance on the farm and produce strong colour. Mint fills the valley by the duck pond, often towering to waist height, with large green leaves that are fragrant and produce a deep yellow colour dye on wool. When ferrous is added to the dyebath to change the pH, the dye is green. Blackberry thorns are essentially a weed to the farm but grow on the roadside. The prickly and sharp brambles attach themselves to small bushes, and trees, making then difficult to irradiate. The berries themselves produce a lavender to purple colour, and when the leaves are used as well this can muddy the colour to more of a mauve purple. Interestingly, when both dyes are used on the yarn in weaker concentrations a grey colour is produced. I have used a 10% to weight of wool, alum solution as a mordant, as to better ensure a colour fast dye (Cardon, 2007). This has developed a range of colours that have allowed me to better express the imagery of the farm. It is worth considering the fact that both mint and blackberry are not native to New Zealand. This means that at some point in the history and engagement with the land, the plants must have been introduced to Fairfax.

Perhaps as they are both consumable they were planted in the family garden, or perhaps the seeds came from birds that had been eating berries in the surrounding area. Either way, there is a certain curiosity to where these plants came from and this shows another layer of history of the farm. It was important to have the colour reflect the farm in this authentic way in order to add to the metaphor of the place being shown in the final weave. However, as I do not live in Southland, I was able to develop a colour palette based on the dye made of site, I then swapped local for local, to use plants from my current surroundings of Wellington to finish off the dying of the yarn. I think that the concept of the dye being taken from abundant plants of place is still strong, even though I had to supplement this. This shows the challenges of using what is available in order to dye large quantities of yarn and celebrates the variations in colour and the true locality of this project.



Figures 50- 52. Natural dye process. Alum being weighed for mordant and dye in dyepots.



Figure 53. Collecting mint from beside the pond. Fairfax, 2017.





Figures 54- 59. Natural dye process photos.

## Materiality

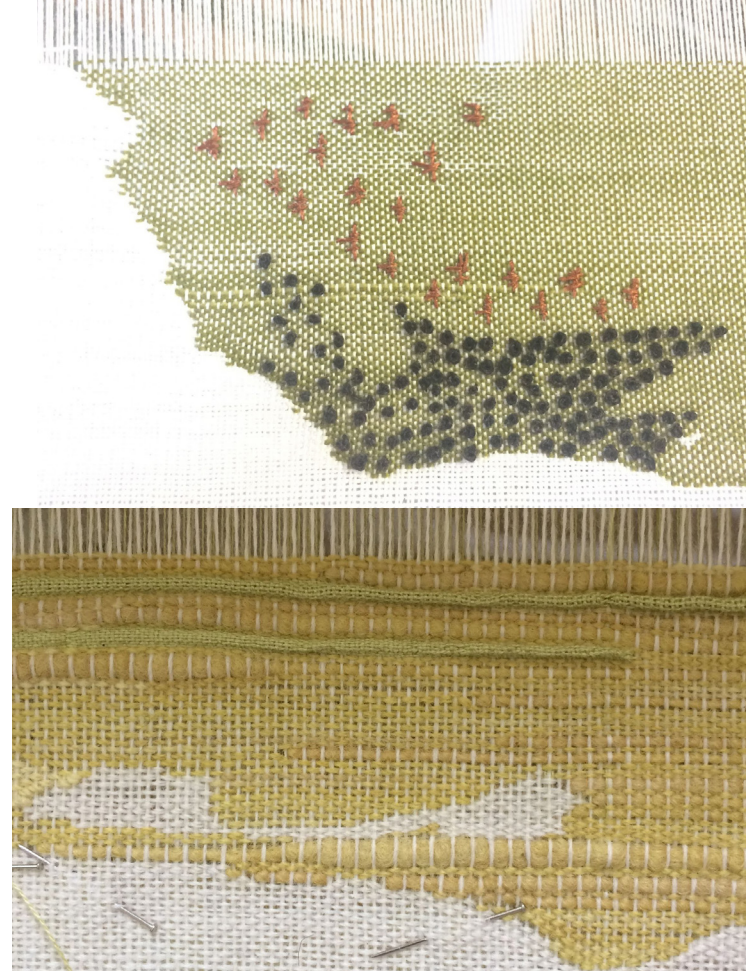


Figure 60. Weaving on the AVL Loom. Massey University Wellington, 2018.

Tapestry weave is where each row of weft combines several colours to slowly build an image within the cloth, rather than inputting a pattern into a lifting plan which creates all over repeat. Tapestry artist Jane Kidd whose work was on display at the textile Museum of Canada in June, has her method described on their website as: "Interlacing threads by hand, without the assistance of mechanization, is time-consuming and ponderous, yet the directness and the freedom afforded by working this way allow Kidd to imbue the woven imagery with her energy and vitality" (Textile Museum of Canada, 2018).

Tapestry weave has been used to create defined and exact images of my drawings and paintings that explore movement and drips of colour. Alternating colours have been used to create the blended sections where the two colours merge together. Each line of the weave has been carefully traced using several shuttles of colour, to define the curves and original qualities of the painted image. The way the woollen weave looks as if the paint has been splashed across it, creates an interesting juxtaposition to the way the woollen cloth would react if dye was in fact applied this way, as it would simply soak and blur into the wool and not create these defined lines.





Figures 61- 63. Samples of tapestry weave.

I then created a large cartoon of sorts, which is the size of how wide I was able to weave the tapestry and after drawing and exploring different layout and composition methods, I decided to use small sections of tapestry and detail within large pieces of flat colour. This is because when you look at the land and at maps, often the detail is only in smaller parts of the overall view. The place is made up of more space and expanse, which is shown by the large sections of flat colour with smaller sections of the intricate detail of the tapestry and embroidery.

The weaving is 100% New Zealand sheep's wool, and therefore links physically to the sheep farm through the material used. I have woven samples of wool from the farm but for the scope of this project I decided that using already washed, carded and spun wool that was readily available and could be dyed, was more important than using wool from the farm as this would take time to process and spin. The final pathway composition is 100% corriedale lambswool from New Zealand.



Figure 65. Threading up the AVL Loom. Massey University Wellington, 2017.



Figure 64. Sample using wool from the farm.



# Findings

## Locality and Sustainability

Locality and place, slow design and sustainable textile processes are inherently linked together. In an exploratory study by the Craft Council UK, into how notions of *place* and *local* are impacting and being expressed in the contemporary craft sector, Dr. Julie Brown describes slow design textile processes as a response to globalized aesthetics and mass production (Brown, 2014). Brown continues to describe that some makers are striving towards raising environmental and sustainable awareness with their products, by emphasizing local trading and suppliers in their work (Brown, 2014).

*Textile view magazine* (2017) introduced previously as the initial source for the colour palate, provides a look on contemporary craft in relation to the idea of slow design. In their number 119 Insight issue, they describe the personal need to have a connection to the materials designers use and to the land they come from “[. . .] it is place that informs the work, allowing a slow and quiet focus on purpose, materials and process” (Textile view magazine, 2017, p. 111).

As *Textile View Magazine* is a current trend forecasting resource, it is worth noting that these themes of sustainable design and slow textiles are influencing the current market. This feeds back into the original aim of this research project, to add value to the current crossbred wool industry, as it shows that notions of sustainable textiles that respond to place, locality and process, are relevant fields of study “We note a response to consumer shifts, away from excess towards more responsible shopping, by the creation of products with more meaning, valuing the handmade, the original and those things with emotion stitched into them”(Textile view, 2017, p. 111). Although my outcome is not for the consumer market itself, the final woven pathway could act as a one-off exhibition experience that adds to the locality and authenticity consumers are looking for. It has the potential to add value to other goods created, as an in-depth investigation into place.

One artist who values sustainable design is weaver Ismini Samanidou. Her woven pieces marry together craft and digital design, and often reference place, stories and surface with sustainable methodologies. Samanidou considers weave to continue to currently be one of the most sustainable textile processes, she suggests that this is in terms of weavings low wastage of materials, and the ability for her designs to connect with people on deeper levels, “Sustainability is

an important aspect of my practice in terms of creating woven work which will be valued, preserved and passed on to future generations” (Quinn, 2013, p. 143). Saminadous weaving being passed down, and valued by more than one generation relates to the emotional durability of her products. This has been researched by Jonothan Chapman, who explains the idea of emotionally durable design. Chapman contends that products are more readily discarded when the owner has no connection to the objects they own. He explains that by creating more emotional and experiential relationship between users and their objects, this can disrupt the need and dependency of consumption. (Chapman, 2005).



Figure 66. Natural dyed hanks of yarn in my workspace. Massey University Wellington, 2017.





Figure 67. Photo of the farm, Fairfax,

“Products that are biodegradable are part of a natural cycle. They come from nature and go back to nature, enriching the soil and nourishing new life”

- (IWTO, 2018)



Figure 68. Still shot taken from the drone imagery of the farm, Fairfax, 2018.



## Returning to place

The international Wool Textile Association, or IWTO, states: "Natural fibres – such as wool – are biodegradable. They do not accumulate in the environment but breakdown naturally to harmless compounds" (IWTO, n.d.). As my final piece is made out of 100% New Zealand wool, and dyed with vegetation from the farm, at the end of the pieces lifecycle the final pathway could return to the farm itself. The soil would act to break down its substrates and allow the nutrients to be released back into the earth. This would provide nutrients for the grass to grow, which would feed the sheep who grow the wool. Because this research project is about place, I think it is important to consider the end of the life cycle, and what it will mean for the earth after its use.

This relates to McDonough & Braungart's approach to sustainable designing that they have termed, *cradle to cradle* (2002). They describe cradle to cradle as a manifest of developing both a different philosophy, and a different practice of manufacture that better serves the environment than the current models used in industry (2002). *Cradle to cradle* seeks to critique current design, as well as the methods of sustainability such as reuse and recycling, and to instead take nature itself as a model in order to create designs that close the loop of what would otherwise eventually even after reuse and recycling, be waste. The idea is that textiles are designed around a biological cycle that avoids synthetic fibres and certain processing methods that include chemicals to ensure that they are able to be safely composted at the end of their life, providing nourishment to the environment when the textile is

discarded (McDonough & Braungart, 2002). I think that this *cradle to cradle* approach is important to my project, as I am designing with the idea of our connection with the land, therefore I should consider the connection that my outcome will have with the land when it ends its use.

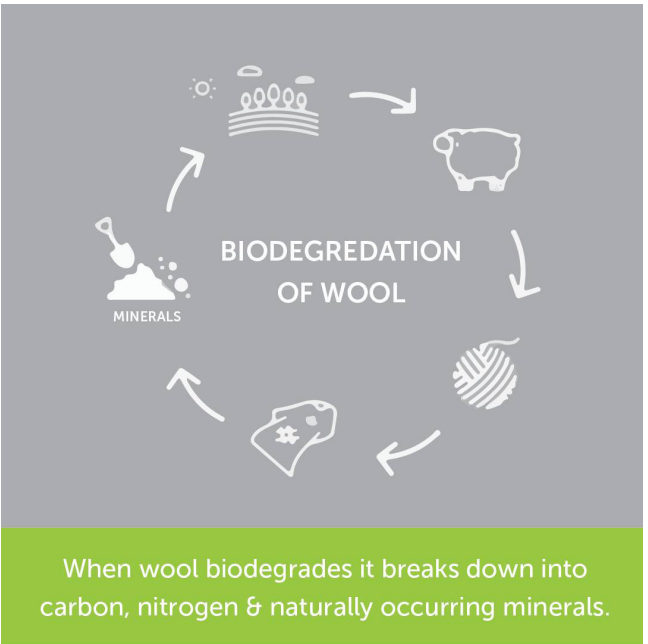


Figure 69. New Zealand Merino. (2018). Wool: the natural cycle. [Digital diagram]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/NZMerinoCo/status/1014410984872554502>

“ ‘Slow Design’ is a unique and vital form of creative activism that is delivering new values for design and contributing to the shift toward sustainability”.

- (Strauss & Fuad-Luke, 2009).





Slow Design

“Slow Research Lab reaches toward this vision by offering an alternative ground for creative practitioners to stand on and ease into. A protected space to open and deepen, extend and enfold, break and unlearn, reformulate and re-root, imagine and evolve. A space of trust and understanding, where pluralism can thrive. A space of poetry and of risk, where unexpected forms and practices emerge. A space of knowing and not-knowing, where new pathways unfold” (Slow Research Lab, n.d).

With the shifting focus of this project, locality and slow design have become embedded within the process and outcome of my research. The in-depth study of a single place has highlighted the locality of the area, using such a small section of this earth as a case study has had its challenges, but has provided an account of the locality of the farm. Carolyn Strauss and Alistair Fuad-Luke from slowLab, discuss six main principles to what is considered slow design. Materiality, the phenomena of locality, reflective consumption, connections to community, place-based values and being an agent for change in behavior and systems are all key points in slow design. The overarching theme and goal of slow design is to be a provocation both for designers and individuals to evaluate and reflect on their design methods, ideas, and objects and the quality of these (Strauss & Fuad-Luke, 2009).

This is the essence of what I want my project to demonstrate and provide a talking point for. Perhaps designers will see the beauty with imperfection

produced by the local natural dyes and will consider using natural dyes in their own applications. Perhaps the use of wool of New Zealand and the study of a sheep farm will create discussion about the sustainability of wool and how this can be used in place of synthetic materials. Perhaps the level of detail that has been developed when exploring place will encourage other designers to think more fully about where they source their material from, and develop connections between place, and user to increase the emotional durability of their design. Or perhaps the juxtaposition of the forms of movement on the expansive land; in stark contrast to the minute bodily movement of myself weaving on the loom, will spark discussion and a re-thinking of how mass-produced goods are so far from having human connection and inspire practitioners to reconsider processes in their production.

1. REVEAL Experiences, processes & materials of everyday life	• Under Observed Phenomena of Locality	• Revealing the diverse Ecology of Fairfax	• Movement of water & livestock & associated patterns	• unexpected aesthetic pleasure of drips & tapestry
2. EXPAND Beyond perceived functionalities. Consider real potential	• Thinking- Through- making & materiality	• final outcome as a provocation "pathway" not product	• possibilities of natural dye & hand weave	• idea of outcome & process as service design
3. REFLECT Induce contemplation reflective consumption.	• Site discovery, Layers of meaning & exploration	• Visible traces of process	• embodiment of labour to natural dye & weave - slow process	• minute detail of weave - vs. Magnitude
4. ENGAGE Collaborations & connections. Transparency key.	• engage with place & community, particular to the farm & local.	• Residue of Process & transparency of process through documentation	• known localities will be engaging to participants users	
5. PARTICIPATE Users as active participants, fosters social accountability	• Users participate in the discussion that the outcome facilitates	• Participation in the process via seeing developments & weaving	• Showing unseen aspects of the place reminds people of their own part in community.	
6. EVOLVE Looking beyond today - behavioural change agents	• Provocation not product, developing sustainable process	• Perhaps my project will stimulate other designers to take more sustainable steps	• future potential, more connection to the land & materials direct	

Figure 71. Diagram showing the six slow design principles and how they relate to my project.

Speculative design

A/B

A

- Problem solving
- Provides answers
- Narratives of production
- Applications
- Innovation
- Makes us buy
- Ergonomics
- Process

B

- Problem Finding
- Asks questions
- Narratives of consumption
- Implications
- Provocation
- Makes us think
- Rhetoric
- Authorship

(Dunne & Raby, 2013, p vii).

The A/B of Speculative Design is proposed by Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby to represent the differences between the way practicing designers view design, and how they believe speculative design differs from this. The above are some key words taken from their original list printed as the opening to their book *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social dreaming*. (Dunne & Raby, 2013). They state that when people consider design, the first thought that comes to mind is problem solving. The issue with this model is that when it comes to larger and more complex problems, designs inherent optimism can try to offer solutions with products and systems, when in reality this is not always right. In response to this, speculative design seeks to create spaces for discussion and debate, propose and invent alternate ways of being, to inspire and encourage thought, and the imagination to flow freely (Dunne & Raby, 2013). Speculative design still focuses on the act of crafting, not only with things, but also ideas.

Dunne and Raby speak of the need for more pluralism in design with both styles, as well as ideology and values being important. The term speculative design can be interlinked with critical design both, “question and offer ‘what if’ scenarios, the form of design is about offering alternatives that highlight the weaknesses within existing normality” (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p. 35).



I place this research at the end of my exegesis, as my process has been true to the methodology of thinking through making, in which the material making had lead me to change my outcome to an exhibition piece provocation rather than a product. My final piece, as well as the process it has taken to get there, has transcended into a reflection of critical or speculative design.

Dunne and Raby describe critical design as starting with identifying the shortcomings and in essence the problem that you want to design toward and what the better version could be. Critical design applies this to larger complex issues. The process of how to design for these bigger issues, is by thinking through design, rather than through words, the critical thought is translated materially- using this design to engage people into discussion.

After my research project developed into more of a piece for exhibition rather than a product, my work focus shifted from innovation to provocation. The process and final woven pathway outcome sit within speculative design, as the intention is to highlight aspects of place and process, designing a space for discussion and imagination.

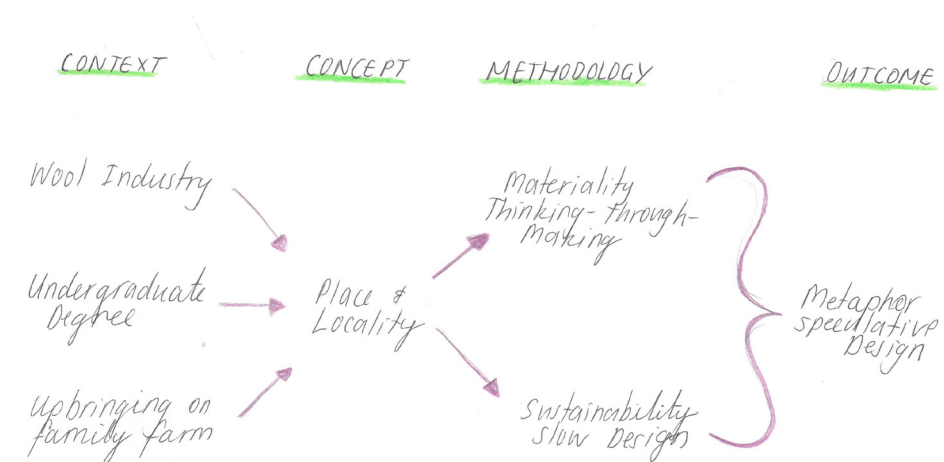


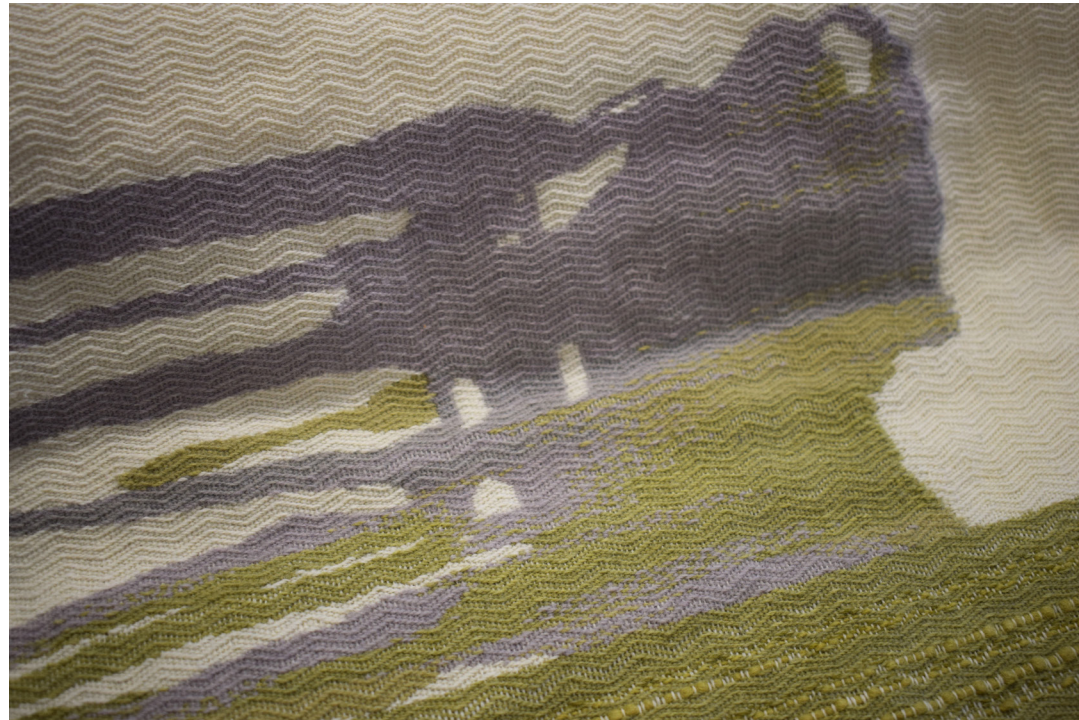
Figure 72. Diagram showing the flow of direction my research project has taken.





# Final Design: Manifest

The following are photos of my final woven pathway. Made with 100% New Zealand wool, naturally dyed with mint and blackberry sourced from Fairfax, New Zealand. Woven with a twill repeat pattern, with sections of tapestry and embroidery. 288 x 59 cm.





# Conclusion

Tracing the path of this exegesis back to where it started leads me to further highlight my desire to add integrity to the New Zealand crossbred wool industry and emphasise the authenticity and sustainability of using wool. Hearing the need for consumers to know where wool comes from and listen to the story further back to the farm gate was how I began. The way I decided to respond to this was through using weaving as a metaphor and place as a way to tell narrative about one of the locations where crossbred wool is grown. Instead of simply articulating the values of wool to my audience, I wanted to take this research a step back, uncovering layers of the farm, following the wool and place of the family farm as it guided me through this project.

The thinking through making methodology has been vital to this approach; and I believe that I have remained authentic to this method of working. This is evident in my shifting outcome from a rug to a speculative design pathway. By working with this method, I was able to be informed by my successful drawings and woven samples, which led me to uncover some unexpected and beautiful layers of the farm such as the key imagery of showing the movement, pattern and expanse that is shown on this land. This methodology enabled the focus to be on connecting with the land, and capturing and communicating that connection as opposed to pursuing a commercial product.

Place was shown through the final woven pathway through the colour, and through the imagery I have woven. Movements and patterns were recreated with the small sections of detail set against the larger expanses of flat colour. Patterns were imbued in the form of tapestry weave that depicted liquid paint moving across the cloth, as well as the patterns my body made while weaving, passing the numerous shuttles of colour back and forth, under and over. The confines of how wide my body was able to weave as well as the confines of using the farm as a fenced off area of land acted as a kind of brief for this projects scope and in turn played roles in defining the dimensions, colours and imagery of my final pathway, which is a manifestation of all of these criteria.

Seeing a visual representation of what my body was able to weave using the technology of the AVL loom was a potent juxtaposition when viewed next to the drone footage of the expanse of the land. We are so used to mass production, and machines that have the ability to weave our cloth for us in large quantities and scales, that this was a poignant way to show the physical limitations of my body using this particular technique and loom and therefore retain the connection between myself and the textile. This embodiment of the method really captured the concepts of slow design and locality.

I think that overall my final woven pathway is a strong example of slow design; however, my initial goal to highlight local production and the wool industry perhaps could have been strengthened by researching more into the history of wool production and the current status of crossbred wool in Southland, New Zealand. One of the confines of designing with slow design processes in mind such as natural dye and tapestry weave is that they are very time consuming, and in the time constraints of my project I was unable to peruse both avenues in depth.

As with all journeys taken, there were choices as to which path to follow and in order to keep the scope of this project manageable I had to forego some routes I would otherwise have liked to explore; such as using and preparing wool from the farm for weave. This leaves space for further developments and the future trajectory of this study. I believe that this research project has the potential to lead to many different areas, such as aspects being woven into a more commercial product such as a rug, or this in-depth investigation being taken to different localities and providing one off pieces to represent the sense of place for different areas.

Guthrie-Smith concludes his study of the Tutira sheep station by stating: “If every chapter has been read, unflinchingly, they can rest assured that in examination, as it were under the microscope, of one sheep station, hey have discovered what is to be found in all. [. . .] [The Author] cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that there is nothing exceptional in the little bit of land about which he ha[s] written”. (Guthrie-Smith, 1953, p.421). The same can be said for the 200 acre property in western Southland that I too have put under the microscope. Within the confines of the barrier fences separating one section of farmland to its neighbour, the differences would be minute. But by delving into this single place, and uncovering different layers and following the pathways where they led, I have been able to create a final woven pathway to describe the sense of place that this particular land has.



# Illustration List

All images are the work of Penny Ronald unless otherwise specified.

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