

# Icelandic Textile Center Art Residency Catalog



2018



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# Johanna Oskarsson

Sweden

The work, the women, the storm. (Emotional landscapes)

My artistic process focusses on an ongoing conversation with the outside world about nature, culture and politics surrounding it, it's about mythology, history and the woman's place in it. The resistance against the dark forces that are slowly shadowing the world as we speak is what keeps me going in my practice.

This particular body or sets place, in the sense that nature is nothing that can be controlled, especially in a place like Iceland, where you are exposed to its full power at times. In February when the snowstorms resolved one after another. I could really feel how my rage against the capitalism and the patriarchy and nature's rage for the exploration of it, got connected into each other.

In the weaving the Icelandic landscape and mythology is combined to a story telling about the current state of my emotions on society.

TOP

**She's a Waterfall of Glitching**

85 x 103 cm  
mercerized cotton, wool, polyester  
digital weave

BOTTOM

**The Devouring Of Polanski By Grýlas**

80 x 103 cm  
mercerized cotton, trevira  
digital weave

photos by Johanna Oskarsson



# Leora Schlanger

Canada

I came to the Icelandic Textile Center seeking time and calm space to learn about myself as an artist. For a long while before my stay I had forgotten how to play while making. Planning and thinking were in my way. At the Textile Center I challenged myself to let my project develop naturally, guided by the feelings and colours of Blönduós in winter.

I brought my tools and just half a yard of wool fabric. I found local sheepskin while exploring in Sauðárkrókur and Einband lopi in the town market. At the Textile Museum I was moved by traditional techniques, specifically the patterns on knitted shoe inserts. As I embroidered my hat with a traditional motif designed by Hélène Magnússon, I thought about the pioneers of handcraft and their legacy.



Warm in Blönduós

Icelandic sheepskin, wool felt, and spun Icelandic wool  
hand sewing, machine sewing, and embroidery  
photos by Alexander Pater





## Barbara Dinnage

United Kingdom

It was a wonderful opportunity to spend a whole month in 'exile' and finally get on with my work. So many distractions in daily life had muddled my priorities. The textile centre was a cosy sanctuary against the snowstorms often raging outside the warm studio windows, yet even on the worst days there was a break in the weather to walk up the road and swim outdoors in that lovely warm pool. During my stay, using Icelandic wool, I completed one experimental and two finished small woven tapestries, often unpicking more than I wove in a day to get it right, knitted a pair of socks and with a little guidance from Ragga I learned to weave from the back. It was good to spend the time with a handful of delightful companions all younger than myself - their enthusiasm was heartwarming. I am returning in February next year as I can't think of anywhere I would rather be for a month in the depths of winter and am hoping then to learn how to use the old Norwegian tapestry loom.

In February 2017 the Reykjavik winter lights festival commenced with illuminations in many moving colours on Hallgrímskirkja which I had seen on the internet. This looked like a perfect weave example for the pick and pick technique, highlighting the vertical columns of this magnificent church.

Hallgrímskirkja Winter Lights Festival

20 x 15 cm  
Einband - Icelandic wool  
tapestry weaving  
photo by Barbara Dinnage





FISHSKINLAB

NORDIC FISH SKIN CRAFT WORKSHOP



Workshop in collaboration with Atlantic Leather at the Icelandic Textile Center with the participation of students from top Nordic Universities in Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and UK: Iceland University of Art, Royal Danish Academy of Arts, Borås University, Aalto University and C St Martins College of Art. Made possible thanks to the generous funding from THE NORDIC CULTURE FUND, OPSTART, SOCIETY OF DYERS AND COLORISTS. Tutors: Lotta Rhame Swedish traditional fish skin tanner. Elisa Palomino CSM BA Fashion Print pathway leader. Katrín María Káradóttir Head of Fashion at Iceland Academy of the Arts.

The aim of the workshop is to preserve and develop the Nordic fish skin leather tradition in a network of skilled craftsmen and Fashion Higher Education students. The first step has been taken in Iceland in March 2018. The network has arranged a Nordic Fish leather craft workshop at the Icelandic tannery Atlantic Leather, who has been turning fish skin into highly sustainable leather since 1994. Their production of fish skin leather is based on taking waste from the food industry. Students were able to interact with the fish leather production and fish skin craftsman Lotta Rhame which have shared with them their know-how. The long perspective for the network will be a knowledge exchange and to build and develop a professional and cultural network on Fish Leather craft innovation.

The group was briefed at an introductory session providing inspiration, basic information regarding ethics and sustainability of fish skin leather and suggestions for further reading and research. There were lectures on fish skin artefacts at international collections. The main activity was a training workshop on traditional methods of tanning and dyeing for fish skin with Lotta Rahme.

From conducting tutorials with the students, we could verify that a lot of the students were very eager to use fish skin as an alternative material in their practice. During the tutorials we suggested them to consider these values further, encouraging innovative design solutions in to their fish skin samples.

Embedding ethical and sustainable values in fashion education needs to be seen as a natural choice rather than an optional choice.

The results were very positive, students took a very personal journey to interpret fish skin leather linked to their own Nordic backgrounds.

Using Richard Sennett's proposal that the embodied skills of craftsmanship provides insight into the skills we required to improve our social and environmental relations, Fish skin leather can be considered a tool to develop changes in our mind sets in lights of the environmental contexts of fashion.







# Hollie Ward

United Kingdom

Hw is inspired by a desire to form a connection with the things we surround ourselves with. Having an almost disdain for the way in which we all live our lives, Ward sought to create a connection with the things we adorn our bodies in on a daily basis. Her love for fabric came from a young age, growing up being inspired by DIY and Punk heavily influencing her teen years, Ward's fascination with making began. The garments now are heavily inspired by the fabric and connections formed through every day life. Each piece is uniquely tailored, letting the fabric form the outcome. Ward has just completed a residency in Northern Rural Iceland working only with Icelandic wool, hand spinning and weaving fabrics then letting them be treated by the nature in Iceland. Allowing them to be frozen outside and left in rivers and the sea.

TOP

## Fishermans Smock

Icelandic wool  
handspun, handwoven,  
fabric washed in Blönduós River and left to freeze

BOTTOM

## Icelandic Jumper

Icelandic wool  
handknitting

photos by Hollie Ward





## Minh Duc Pham

Germany

The Textile Residency in Blönduós was a very remarkable period in my artistic practice. I spent two months with inspiring people from all over the world sharing visions, ideas and skills.

This opened a huge field of thinking, working and experiencing textiles to me. For the first time I was working with sewing machines and latex fabric and created (for me) very important and retrospective works.



Pageant Treasure Soft Decor

7 x 5 cm  
latex, string, silicon spray, hair  
mask out of deformed latex objects, photo series  
photos by Minh Duc Pham



**Thriving Pleasure Diagnosis**

20 x 20 x 45 cm  
latex, metal, string, wire, silicon spray  
glued and deformed latex layers  
photo by Minh Duc Pham

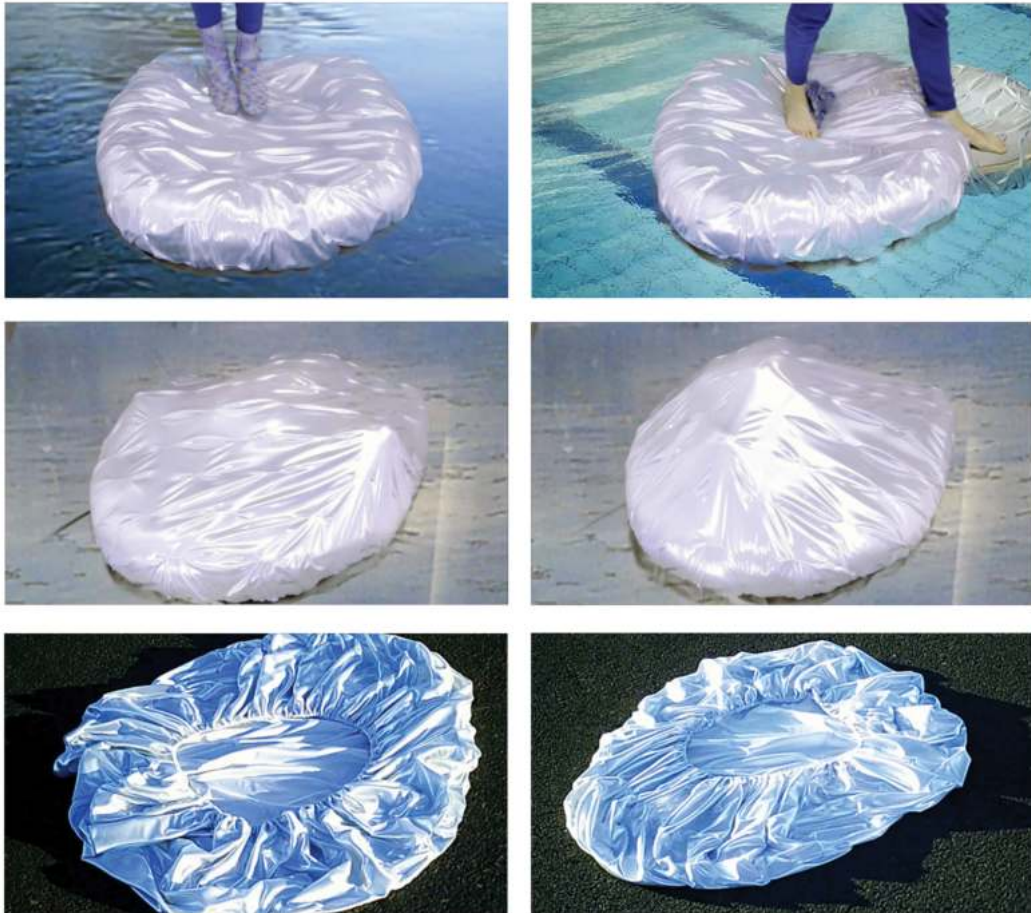
# Leila Plouffe

Canada

My process often utilizes textiles through conceptual video, performance and sculptural work. The work I made during this time at the Icelandic Textile Center was an exploration on surface, on how everyday perception is filtered, regulated and understood through surface. Considering the ways in which objects are visually registered and processed through the illusion of surface. Our bodies too, operate as membranes, permeable, corporeal surfaces through which our internal experiences are filtered.

Textiles offer an interesting form of engagement with the tactility, and creation of a surface or boundary.





TOP

**illusion of fullness**

1280 x 720 pixels  
video, performance

OPPOSITE

**a rupture in surface tension**

1280 x 720 pixels  
video, performance

photos by Leila Plouffe

# Clara Pinto Bianchetti

Argentina

Clara spent a month in Textilsetur Islands Residency in Iceland, where she collected raw wool and horse hair as well as compiling photographs of scars and marks in women's skin. The research and experimentation led to Mummies, her latest collection. Mummies was presented at the Argentine Ambassador's Residency from September 20th to September 24th, in the context of the London Design Biennale.

SS19 - Mummies

human size  
wool, PVC, satin  
felting, embroidery  
photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella





## FLYING GOLD CAPE

CELIA PYM



In 2016, I was commissioned by the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco to mend a large Gold Cape, made from silk and cotton and decorated with thousands of sequins. The history of this beautiful garment is a mystery. It was found in one of the museum's non-inventoried material boxes. These boxes contain damaged costumes and 'study' fragments from the Monte-Carlo Opera House. There were no notes or documents relating to the Gold Cape. We don't know for which ballet it was made, which long-dead dancers wore it, which characters they played while wearing it, or exactly how old it is...

That spring in 2016, I took the Gold Cape with me to a residency at Texílsetur Íslands, Blönduós. The cape came along because it needed a lot of work, and I need to finish commissions wherever I happen to be working but also because I was attracted to the idea that I was carrying something from the Mediterranean up to north-east Iceland. I mended the cape slowly, tacking the silk to a cotton layer, securing flyaway fragments of silk and lining up the sequins into roughly straight lines.

During this mending time, I became curious about what the Gold Cape might actually look like when worn on the body. How would it sit and move, how would the handles work and what would it feel like to wear? I mentioned this idea to Conni Theimer Gardella and she introduced me to Berglind Björnsdóttir, the high-school's vice principle. We either met at an evening knitting group, where the group were working on lamp-post snoods (I totally fell in love with these knitted lamp-post covers but that is a different story) or Conni might have taken me to the school and introduced me to Berglind there. Either way we met and I asked Berglind





if she thought her students might like to try on the cape, examine the repair and learn about its beginnings at the Monte-Carlo Opera House. She was enthusiastic and organised a group of children to gather at the nearby community hall. They danced about in the Gold Cape and struck poses on the stage against a blue-and-gold star-studded backdrop. Then after the children left, some adults who had gathered to watch the children took their turn to wear the cape on stage and outside in the parking lot, dancing to music from an upstairs room. That afternoon was a lot of fun. Conni took some wonderful photographs capturing the atmosphere and Marie O'Connor and Richard McVetis, artists I had come to Textílsetur with, assisted brilliantly dressing students in the cape.

When I returned home to England I thought a lot about the experience of actually wearing the cape. How *easy* it was for the children to wear. The cape slipped on quite naturally over their clothes. I also recalled how readily they transformed themselves into 'characters' when they wore it. How, above all, the afternoon was *simple* - I hadn't needed to explain a great deal about the cape itself.

So I wrote to the museum in Monaco: 'The Cape, now mended, is ready to go on the road. I propose the **Flying Gold Cape** project. This will be a series of 'cape-wearing' sessions with different people at different locations across three countries. The sessions will aim to give people the opportunity to try on the cape and experience a feeling of dressing-up and transformation, and to see the repair. To *enjoy* the cape and have fun wearing and handling an old garment, without fear of damaging it - it can after all, always be mended again.'

The museum agreed to this idea, and in spring 2018, together with the photographer Michele Panzeri, I set off on tour with the Gold Cape. At each stop the cape worked differently. In Blönduós in Iceland school students processed through town looking for natural beauty and dramatic landscapes to set the scene; the cape was worn by the members of a local craft club; Jóhanna Palmadóttir wore it, taking us to a spot with her farm as the background and Conni wore it by the weaving studio next to Kvennaskollin. At Cap Fleuri, Monaco's retirement home for adults with dementia, music played and people wore the Gold Cape and sang, performing for each other, with those observing occasionally joining in and singing too; care assistants wore it in the garden; museum staff wore it at work; at the Opéra Garnier, it's original home, caped figures stood on the stage and in the auditorium for their moment in the limelight. And in London, primary-school children drew imaginary capes and then dressed up in the Gold Cape itself and paraded with serious faces in the school, photographing each other, and in the playground running with it, so that the cape flew out behind them.

A day from the tour was when we photographed 13 students from Blönduóskoli. It was a beautiful April day, the students were brilliant – embracing the opportunity and wearing the cape with their own style and personality. They helped each other – carrying the cape around by it's ends, so that at times we really did look like some sort of royal or important procession. They also all photographed each other documenting the event. I appreciate everyone who had their photo's taken – especially their enthusiasm and trust to take part in the project. I am deeply grateful in Blönduós to Conni, Berglind and Jóhanna for their warm and generous support of the Flying Gold Project. It definitely could not have happened without them.

Sixty-three people from Blönduós, Monaco and London wore the cape. It became more damaged with fragments of silk flying away at each stop. It is thinner now and more well-worn. It has had to be re-repaired. The Gold Cape has had a second, wholly unexpected life just as varied and extraordinary as its first, echoes of which can now be heard.

*Celia Pym, September 2018*

### **Flying Gold Cape**

by Celia Pym

photographs by Michele Panzeri

commissioned by Nouveau Musée National de Monaco

Photographs © Celia Pym and Michele Panzeri

[www.celiapym.com](http://www.celiapym.com)



## Catie Palmer

United Kingdom

The Textile Center allowed me to rediscover my love of textiles and clothing. My background is in fashion design and before coming to Iceland I had been working as a knitwear designer in London. I found that the reality of being a knitwear designer meant working mainly on the computer and during the three years in my job I never once picked up a pair of knitting needles. I used my time at the Textile Center to reconnect with my craft, I wanted to start right from the beginning, from the raw fibre. Through the wisdom and skills of those around me, my fellow artists in residence, the staff at the Textile Center and the local community of Blönduós, I learnt about the Icelandic wool industry, how to scour the dirty fleeces, then card them into leppas and spin them into yarn. Through many weeks of struggle my fellow artists and I managed to conquer an indigo vat and dyed my hand spun yarn into vivid shades of blue much like those brilliant Icelandic spring skies. Finally I knitted my yarn into a vest, the design of which was inspired by children's thermals I saw in the Icelandic Textiles Museum in Blönduós.

### The Process

Icelandic wool and indigo dye  
hand scoured, carded, spun, dyed and  
knitted  
photos by Catie Palmer





## Jessica Mordine Young

United States

When I applied to the program, my life was in a moment of flux, and I needed time and space to think and make art and art objects. Coming to the Icelandic Textile Center residency allowed for me to explore new ideas in my work and to have clarity on my goals as both an artist and educator. The woven textiles I produced here are inspired by my observation in the change of seasons and the both hard and soft Icelandic landscape. I quickly learned how essential place is to my practice.

While I had come with the intention of carving out a moment to weaving in solitude and be with my thoughts, I am so very thankful for the interactions I had with others both from in and outside of the residency. I feel fortunate to have been able to live and work with such a talented group of women while also learning about life in Blönduós. I had not anticipated that these components of my time here would so deeply affect my experience in the best way possible.





TOP

**Untitled**

18 x 120 in  
Icelandic wool  
handwoven and handdyed

OPPOSITE LEFT

**Mini Rug**

30 x 40 in  
Icelandic wool and natural dye  
handwoven and handdyed

OPPOSITE RIGHT

**Throw**

48 x 48 in  
Irish wool and cotton  
handwoven

photos by Jessica Mordine Young



## Julia Boros

Australia

In Iceland the light touches everything in ways that vary constantly during the day. I have become aware of the light and its presence in the waking and non waking hours of the day.

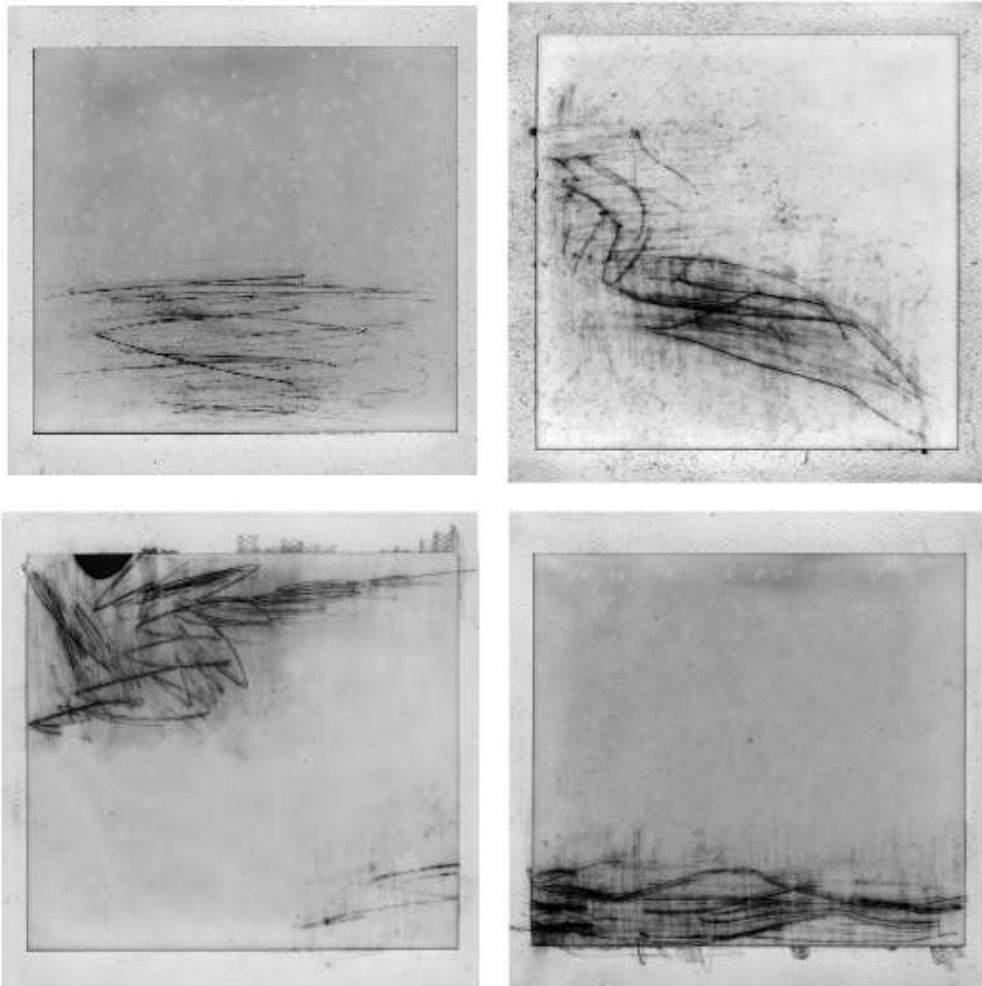
A literal translation of the way the light traces the outlines of the scenic mountains against the sky is expressed through sewn horse hair drawings on tracing paper.

The definition of knitted and net structures made from charcoal rubbings is determined by the amount of pressure applied to the substrate.

The tablet woven works require working with one strand of horse hair at a time. Etching into Polaroid emulsion allowed a transfer of the reverberations and rhythms of the landscape inexplicably not captured on film.

These gestures deepened my understanding of what it means to have a light touch.





THIS PAGE

**Polaroid Drawings**

Polaroid film and charcoal  
photography  
photos by Julia Boros

OPPOSITE

**Untitled Net #2**

size variable  
cotton and charcoal  
circular loom knitted  
photo by Tim Gresham

## Anne Greenwood Rioseco

United States

I applied to the Textile Center-Residency for its particular niche in textiles, tapestry-making & the shared geological landforms of Iceland/Oregon. As I entered into this new artistic focus of combining my interests in arts & sciences, my work began to investigate the natural features of these two landscapes: mountain, weathering, volcanic, fluvial & coastal. I was also drawn to the idea that I would be part of an international cohort of artists that were exploring the fibers medium.

My recent project "Tapestry of Hours," is a multi-media textile book created using printmaking, textiles & collaboration techniques to explore the life & needlework poetry of Oregon poet Hazel Hall. This is the mindset with which I am contemplating my practice -layered, past & present, permanent & ephemeral- are the words that continue to appear and reappear within the way I approach art-making as a process, the themes of my work, along with the Nordic culture where embroidery originated in my ancestral story.

The experience of working as an artist in Iceland, embedded within this exceptional community at the Textile Center, exceeded any ideas I had about what I would make, who I would meet & what would happen while there & once I returned home.



Creased Work

17 x 17 in each, series of four  
repurposed household linens, hand-dyed in fustic  
fabric manipulation, natural dyeing  
photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella



**Layers of Light**

60 x 60 x 120 in  
tussah wild silk, crinoline, indigo, logwood, willow  
natural dyeing, hand-stitching  
photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella

## Laureen Andrews

United States

Attending the Textile Center Residency is a fiber artist's dream come true--the ultimate immersion in art and creativity. I was able to try something new, to create something unique to Iceland and to enjoy inspiration from my fellow artists from around the world.

Having such a spacious, well-equipped dye studio made it easier to try dyeing a knitted blank, as well as working with different gradient types on undyed wool. I tried my hand (ha) at sculpture with an MC Escher-inspired piece. One of my goals for this time was to combine some of my glass art beads with fiber art somehow. I was able to make a shawl pin using 100% recycled materials to coordinate with a spiky "dragon" shawl. Working on the pink/blue "My Favorite Shawl" had me learning new stitches and gave me the rare chance to dye, design, knit, block and wear something--the whole process--in one continuous period of time. Another goal I had was to make an Icelandic sweater. I made a vest for my granddaughter because we live in Northern California, where it is seldom cold enough for a thick warm sleeved Icelandic sweater. What a rewarding project! Iceland, I will return!



Adia's Icelandic Sweater

30 x 24 in  
100% Icelandic wool  
handknit

photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella



### My Favorite Shawl

40 x 30 in

wool

handknit

photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella

# Georgia Connolly

Ireland

Whilst completing my month at the Textile Center, I was mesmerised by the changing cloud-scape. The weather in Blönduós changes dramatically and instantly from splitting sunshine to blizzard, to soft drizzle, then lashing rain and back again. The wide open skies and perpetual daytime allowed me to indulge my cloudgazing. The fluffy lemon-tipped ice-cream mounds of cloud galloping across the sky could suddenly halt and descend as an all-enveloping mist, obscuring one's own hands from view. Then again, they could gently start streaking painterly strokes of pink and persimmon across the horizon, blending the glaciers of the Western Fjords into the sea. Another time they could disappear completely, leaving no trace.

I began trying to recreate the fascinating Icelandic clouds using Icelandic lambswool and natural dyes. I developed such a strong attachment to the fleece during the process of washing it, dyeing it, teasing it out and mixing colours, blending and fluffing into clouds. Capturing the ephemeral colour and texture of water vapour through something as tangible, useful and durable as wool represents my experience in Iceland. The hardiness, toughness and unwavering strength of the Icelandic landscape and its people do not prevent magic, dreams and wonderment from pervading everyday life.

TOP

**What Colour is Water?**

150 x 100 x 50 cm

Icelandic lambswool, Merino, cochineal, logwood, weld, madder, branch  
dyeing/mixed media

BOTTOM, LEFT & RIGHT

**Glacier Hat & Cloud Hat**

25 x 20 cm each

Icelandic wool  
knitting

photos by Georgia Connolly





## Emily Yurkevicz

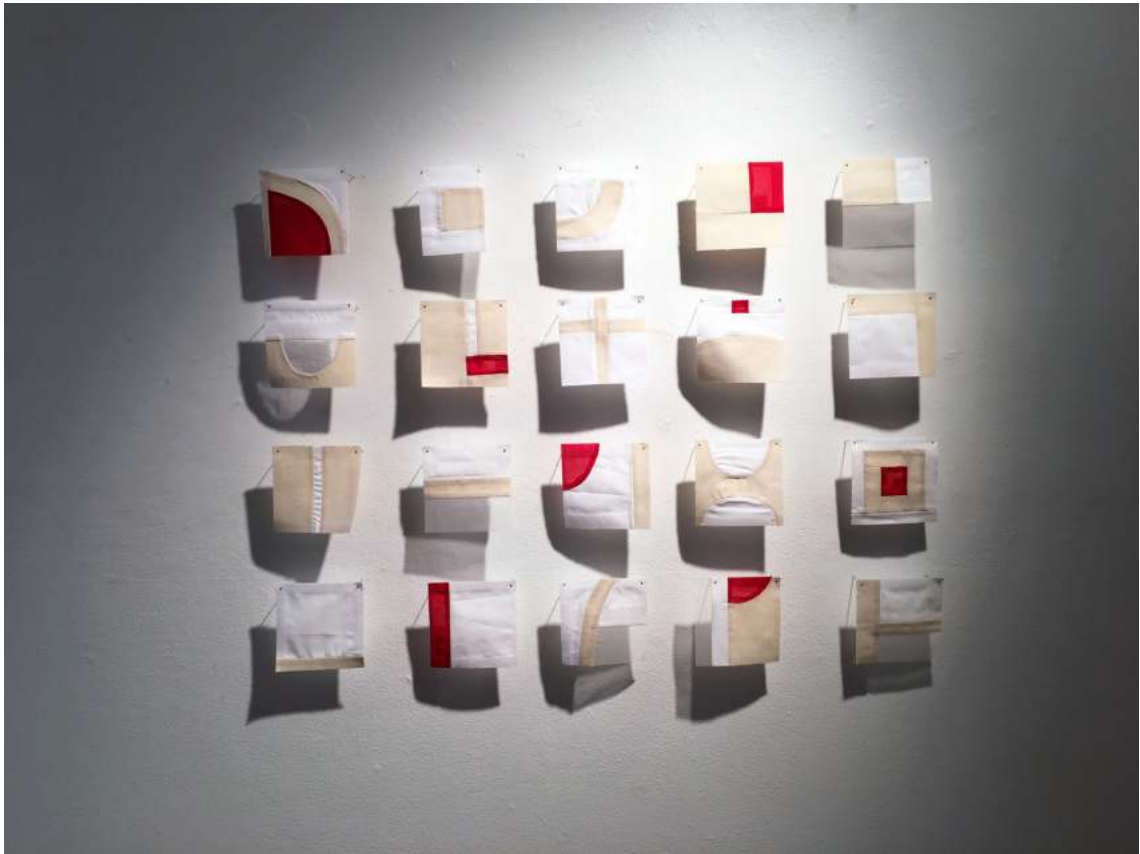
United States

During my time at the Textile Center I was inspired by the landscape and minimal colors of Iceland. While I worked on some quilted compositions there, I continued that body of work once I returned and have included some newer work informed by my time at the Textile Center here.



### Handwork

6 x 6 in each  
silk, cotton, glass beads, cotton thread, wool batting  
hand stitching  
photo by Emily Yurkevicz



Patchwork

40 x 30 in  
cotton, silk, cotton thread  
piecing  
photo by Emily Yurkevich

## Tove Petersen

Denmark

My stay at the Textile Center Residency was most inspiring although it did not really influence my production. I had a specific agenda for my stay, but learning/getting acquainted with the Icelandic textile traditions was learningful for me. Particularly the use of tanned fish skin gave me valuable inspiration.

The adjoining textile museum is a treasure trove for lovers of ethnic textiles!



Reversible silk blanket with patchwork on one side

225 cm x 260 cm  
recycled Indian sari silk  
patchwork on one side, pieced saris on the other  
photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella



Silk coat lined with silk and fish skin appliqués

underarm width 116 cm, length 106 cm from shoulder seam  
Japanese silk, Indian recycled silk, fish skin  
sewn in the Central Asian Chapan style, felled seams  
photo by Cornelia Theimer Gardella



## Catherine Ferland

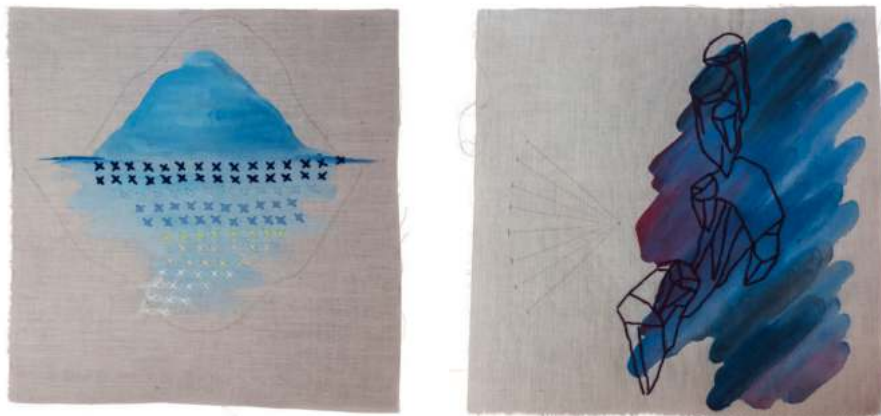
Canada

The work I did during my one-month residency at the Textile Center took two different directions.

For the first part, my original goal was to try and capture, daily, the everchanging colors of the unique and eternal Icelandic sunsets. I “noted” them down on small cotton squares with acrylic paint, before adding shapes and lines using embroidery. These small pieces, at first having to do with a journal or a travel log, quickly evolved into something more personal, with motifs and subjects emerging from my imagination, my feelings, what I saw and what I discovered during my stay at the Textile Center.

The other work I did involved weaving a warp composed of a mix of cotton and fishing line, which permitted me to experiment with certain aspects of my craft for the first time, such as volumes and hollow spaces within the woven fabric. I was able to grasp a more sculptural approach to weaving, as the finished pieces can be twisted and bent to acquire the desired shape.

The Textile Center and Iceland was for me a “place of space”, where I had the chance to look, listen, feel and learn. I am grateful for that place and space.





TOP

Expérimentations 1 et 5 / Experimentations no. 1 and 5  
Expérimentation 1, détail / Experimentation no. 1, detail

approx. 36 x 14 in and 42 x 5 in respectively  
cotton, fishing line, acrylic  
weaving

OPPOSITE

Matins - suite, jour 3 / Mornings - suite, day 3  
Matins - suite, jour 6 / Mornings - suite, day 6

10 x 10 in each  
cotton, acrylic, pencil  
embroidery, painting and drawing

photos by Cornelia Theimer Gardella

## Imagining Iceland

Concordia University Montreal, Canada

Under the course title of “Imagining Iceland,” the Iceland Field School offers students experiential, place-based learning with specific reference to the Iceland context and its meanings and opportunities for Canadian learners. Our aim is not simply to learn about place. Rather, we aim to learn with and through place via connection with local experts and critical and creative engagement with our own experience. ‘Place’ for the IFS is the 800-person community of Blönduós in northwest Iceland, and more specifically the Icelandic Textile Center which since 2005 has provided yearround residencies to artists working in textiles, material practices, historical research, performance and digital arts.

After my own transformative month at the Icelandic Textile Center in June 2016, I recognized its potential as a place for interdisciplinary art-making and learning for Concordia students, and conceived of a ‘field school’ as a hands-on, critically-engaged intensive: hence this “Special Topics” mixed level Concordia University course.



In the IFS's first iteration, 13 Concordia students, BFA to PhD, lived and worked for the month of June 2018 at the Icelandic Textile Center. Following a curriculum that encouraged exploration of culturally specific techniques, engagement with communities and in-depth work on projects of their own choosing, students developed and enhanced skills in textile practices via workshops in and time to practice spinning, weaving, natural dyeing and knitting. They lived an extraordinary time under 24-hour daylight, showcasing their work to Canadian-born Icelandic First Lady Eliza Reid, singing/spinning onstage at the opening to the Knitting Festival, visiting hot springs and glaciers, and cheering with hundreds of soccer fans at the community centre's large screen presentation of Iceland's big game during the 2018 World Cup.

Through readings, research, conversations with locals and a field trip to the Blanda Power Plant, students also built understanding of complex social challenges common to Iceland, Canada and other developed nations - challenges that are very visible in Iceland's comparative microcosm and exceptionally progressively addressed. Migration and





inclusion (of both refugees and tourists). Environmentalism (in particular, respect for wild natural spaces and sustainable generation of electrical power via hydro sources). Identity, sovereignty and post-colonialism (in 2018 Iceland celebrated a centenary of independence from Denmark's colonization). IFS students engaged intellectually and creatively with these issues and exhibited their performances, artworks, functional textiles and videos in Iceland (June 2018) and Canada (September 2018).

The Iceland Field School came to be thanks to the generosity, engagement and support of our hosts at the Icelandic Textile Center and the essential assistance of Concordia International, which administered the project and procured Quebec Government mobility funding that partially offset the program fee for students. Concordia University's Department of Art Education and Faculty of Fine Arts have also been staunchly encouraging. I am grateful for the collaboration of so many, and enormously moved by the willingness and energies of the adventurous, thoughtful 13 students who embarked on the first iteration of the Iceland Field School with me.

Takk fyrir,

Kathleen Vaughan, MFA, PhD

Associate Professor, Art Education, Concordia University Montreal







PREVIOUS SPREAD, LEFT PAGE, LEFT

Rythâ Kesserling creates **Weaving Memories** in Iceland's Westfjords  
photo by Meghan Riley

PREVIOUS SPREAD, LEFT PAGE, RIGHT

**Fiskur | Oranges** by Annick St-Arnaud  
photo by Annik St-Arnaud

PREVIOUS SPREAD, RIGHT PAGE

Video still from **drangajökull - zwicky** by Chris Mendoza  
photo by Chris Mendoza

OPPOSITE LEFT

Detail from **Memory, Thought, and Knowledge** by Maisa Mreiwed  
photo by Maisa Mreiwed

OPPOSITE RIGHT

Meghan Riley's hand spun and hand dyed wool at Hrótey Island, Blönduós  
photo by Meghan Riley

TOP

Detail from **Collective Threads: An Icelandic Story** by Hannah Grabowecky  
photo by Hannah Grabowecky

## Deborah Gray

United Kingdom

Much of my creative work explores the relationship between textile and the land(scape) it originates from. My Textile Center residency in June and July 2018 focused on Icelandic wool and local dyeplants. The dual fibre coat of Icelandic sheep is almost unique, and I explored the characteristics of tog and thel in natural dyeing and in creating different yarns. Slowly separating the fibres by hand allowed me to really appreciate their textures.

For the first month I hand-spun yarns which were either pure tog or pure thel. I collected dyeplants in the local area and dyed both types of yarn. Tog yarns are crisp and lustrous and develop rich intense colours, while matte thel yarns dye to lighter shades in the same dyebath. In July I continued to spin tog and thel separately, but then recombined them in over 35 different yarn structures.

Sharing studio space with other artists was a big part of the residency experience. I enjoyed the exchange of ideas and the opportunity to exhibit work twice with different co-exhibitors and disciplines. I'll be back in 2019 to continue my exploration of Icelandic wool in this extraordinary and inspiring place.



Handspun 4-ply cable yarn, tog 2018

40 g skein  
Icelandic wool tog  
hand spun  
photo by Deborah Gray



Selection of handspun boucle yarns 2018

10-35 g skeins  
Icelandic wool, tog and thel  
hand spun  
photo by Deborah Gray

# Sarah Ciurysek

Canada

I typically make large-scale photographs of the ground and underground: soil, grasses, roots. A recent project, “Fell”, featured black and white photos of the bottoms of fallen trees: the dark soil of each tree’s circular root ball made a kind of void, and the forest’s foliage framed that void. What I worked on at the Textile Center is in conversation with the “Fell” photographs. Here, in these in-progress studies, I have used dark green and black weavings that I made at the Textile Center, which for me are reminiscent of the intertwining branches of the forest. In 2019 I will continue to alter, interrupt, and make void these wall-based textiles by physically cutting and patching; these photographs are preparatory studies.

The Textile Center offered an incredible natural setting for me to weave in for the first time, and a warm and knowledgeable community of textile-based artists for me to learn from and with. Thank you.

Untitled study 1 + 2 + 3

16 x 24 in each  
mercerized cotton  
handwoven  
photo by Sarah Ciurysek





# Janice Lessman-Moss

United States

When planning for my residency, I tried to anticipate a response to the light and colors of Iceland through visual research conducted before my travels. While this is no substitute for the reality of place, I felt it was necessary to arrive in Blönduós prepared to begin weaving, since the process of creation is long and labor intensive. I expected it would take considerable time to explore this unique environment, process visual stimuli and do justice to new reflections. I was pleased when my imagined palette seemed quite perceptive and excited to begin weaving. At the TC2 loom, I continued to absorb the nuances and dynamic contrasts of place that surrounded me in the studio. The magnificent view, the ever-changing vista informed my sensibility and seamlessly provided the foundation for several new series of small weavings.

Referencing micro and macro cosmic natural systems through a vocabulary of circles and squares, my weavings have always been abstract. Visual connections are established between patterns of changing scale, texture and fluidity, creating a cohesive whole through the collaging of disparate fragments with similar root shapes. This same unity from complexity was evident in the distinctive juxtapositions in the landscape of my residency.

TOP

#469, Summer Walk Iceland: New Territory I

45.5 x 43.5 in  
silk, linen

digital jacquard, hand woven TC2, painted warp, weft ikat

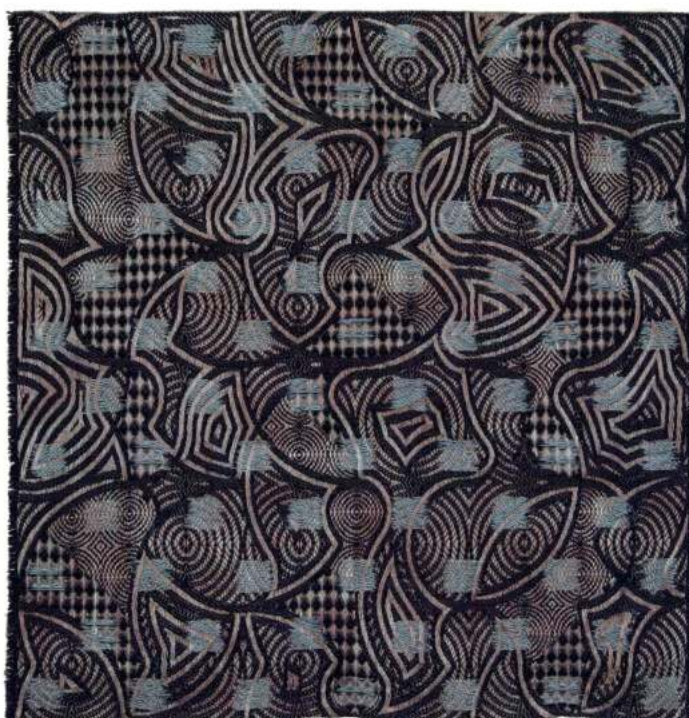
BOTTOM

#470, Summer Walk Iceland: New Territory II

44.5 x 43.5 in  
silk, linen

digital jacquard, hand woven TC2, painted warp, weft ikat

photos by Janice Lessman-Moss



## Beatrice Larkin

United Kingdom

I have such fond memories of my time in Blönduós. The month-long residency allowed me an escape from London and gave me time to get inspired and create, without the restrictions that my woven textiles business demands.

The environment, especially the changing colours of the sky was a huge inspiration to me. The dusky blues, blacks and greys of Sauðárkrókur sands and the patterning of the peat turf houses lent itself to the colours and weave structures I took back to the studio. I wanted to give myself the space to weave without too much thought about end usage. I trialed some chunkier wool yarns and experimented with tapestry weaving, which was a new direction for me. I also learnt to use the countermarch looms, a type of loom I hadn't used before.

Time seemed to pass at a different pace in Blönduós and I loved the slowing down of things. A month seemed to speed by. I came back to London with samples and sketches, which have developed into a new collection of fabrics to launch in the coming months. My time at the Icelandic Textile Centre re-energised me as a designer maker and after a long time not having hand woven, made me fall in love with the process all over again. I would love to return at a different time of the year to experience the changing environment. It's a truly magical place and has made a lasting impression on me, and my work.



Sauðárkrókur





TOP  
Twills

wool  
woven

BOTTOM  
Peat Turf House

photos by Beatrice Larkin

## Emma Oliver

United States

The Textile Center Residency helped to broaden my uses of yarn while bringing it back to tradition. While I was there I worked on several specific projects including a crochet portrait and several sweaters. Over time the sweaters took over becoming my primary use of time. Using Icelandic wool allowed me to connect more with my surroundings. Creating my own sweater patterns based on the relationships I have with friends, family and lovers gave me the chance to discuss what I felt and saw between us from thousands of miles away.



THIS PAGE

### Self Portrait in Pink

size medium women's sweater  
Icelandic wool  
knitting

OPPOSITE TOP & BOTTOM

### Jesshús & Christónlist

size medium women's sweaters  
Icelandic wool  
knitting

photos by Emma Oliver





## Maria Flawia Litwin

Canada

The Textile Center re-ignited my love for craft, sewing in particular. Inspired by the landscape, fellow residents, staff and women who studied here, I used traditional pattern making and sewing techniques to create sculptural clothing using locally sourced fabrics.

Thanks to this experience I was reminded of my connection to craft and how it was a gateway to art in my life. Thank you. May my hands be always making.



Untitled

wool/cashmere/horsehair  
sewing

photos by Dave Belle



# Riikka Peltola

Finland

Pure bliss. That's how I remember my August 2018 residency time at the Icelandic Textile Center, Blönduós.

The basis of my creativity is in observing and challenging the world around. I typically work with intuition as a tool of investigation and analogy as a creative process. Enthusiasm and curiosity drive me to explore even the more unusual subjects. Different phenomena, both natural and societal, as well as the diversity of environment transform in my mind garments and knit structures. My aim is to develop traditional crafting techniques in a modern, intelligent way and advance creative thinking through textile art. Yarn is my absolute favorite material, and what would be a better place to work with fibers than Iceland.

At the residency I focused to create visually represented concept, collection research book to my next clothesline. During one month I was making knit samples and documenting my creative process by photographing and writing notes about thoughts that came into my mind when walking around town. Blönduós gave me excellent material how to refine my thinking into designing process. I started to produce my knitwear line right away when returning to Finland. I will represent my collection at international Näytös19 event Helsinki, in spring 2019.



Sample 1

30 x 30 cm  
polyester fabric  
sublimation printing, pleating  
photo by Riikka Peltola



### Knit samples

20 x 20 cm  
different fibres, glue fabric, silk  
mixed media  
photo by Riikka Peltola



## Meghan Price

Canada

I work with a wide array of materials, hand and digital technologies to explore ways of bridging human and geologic timescales. My practice was founded in weaving and textiles remain central to my ways of making and thinking. I spent this residency working on the TC2 digital jacquard loom and continued my research in weaving geologic structures and patterns using waste plastics. It was glorious to have unlimited access to this tool for an entire month.



Tongue (detail)

190 x 53 cm  
linen, waste plastic  
digital jacquard weaving



Igneous (details)

cotton, wool, waste plastic  
digital jacquard weaving

all photos by Meghan Price

# Signe Emdal

Denmark

I usually work with industrial making of fabrics,” says Emdal. “Especially jacquard techniques, knitted and woven. But in August 2018 I created a new adventure with analogue knottec. I named the technique “touch”. It’s a hybrid of a few things.”

My Little Icelandic Pony was woven in Lopi wool by Emdal during a residency at the Icelandic Textile Center, supported by the Danish Art Council combining two knotting techniques on the old Norwegian tapestry loom. “This material-construction reflects profound human experiences from my own life. The subject of touch and physical contact is very important in the current digital communication world we live in,” says Emdal.

This is how she explains the concept behind her very tactile creation: “A living human skin is not just a surface. A living skin is the direct transition to a human’s inner life. The heart. Before you get to touch your lover’s skin, you travel through layers of invisible fur. This may take time. It may take a while before you get to touch the actual skin material. When you finally get there, you enter the actual merging phase. The more you touch, the more you will merge. After a while, your touch will be visible and you change your lover’s blueprint forever. Let it be a gentle touch. Like approaching an animal for the first time. Humble. Slow. With presence and respect.”

My Little Icelandic Pony

75 x 50 x 18 cm

Lopi wool

carpet knots

photo by Signe Emdal



Yuk Ling WONG 王玉玲

Hong Kong

Compared with the fast rhythm of Hong Kong, the Icelandic Textile Center granted me the peaceful time and homely space, which I can concentrate on my creation. I was much inspired by the peculiar landscape of the country and her rich heritage in textile arts. The ever changing sky during morning and dawn time accommodated my spirit well and widened my horizon on nature. After my stay, I acquired more concerns on the relationship between arts and environment. Followed the appreciation on the beauty of used object and nature, I have started to make works using recycling concept.

The work “affection on clothes” has been developed from my planning, which is a work integrating old clothes collage and metal wire knitting. Another work “going off of iceberg “ was inspired by the iceberg I saw on the south of Iceland. I have adapted my technique of making silk sculpture to create the iceberg which is going to disappear. The light from her inner soul still shines in glamorous way now.



Going off of iceberg

40 x 40 x 30 cm  
stain and lamp  
silk sculpture  
photo by Yuk Ling Wong





Affection on clothes

140 x 40 x 20 cm  
old clothes, satin, different metal wires  
clothes collage and metal wire knitting  
photo by Rex Cheung

## Justine Sawicz

Canada/Poland

I work with haptic, interactive multi-sensory media and sensuous queer theory to rethink the materiality of video, sound, sculpture and performance. As a multi-disciplinary artist, I primarily use performances to provoke fantasies of futurities that register speculative fiction, pseudosciences and dreams as valid systems of knowledge in reimagining possible futures. Although video has historically privileged the optical experience, in my work I explore how other physiological responses are implicated and equally involved within the electronic texture of video and sound. Through this notion of embodied spectatorship, I disembody or frustrate normative representations of the body through use of text as unreliable narrative, sound as permeating, and visuals as destabilized vision. As a genderblending artist, I investigate notions of futurity within a queer framework to address my body as a supple material that performs various genders, personas, and gestures in collaboration with technologies. I am interested in the haptic quality of our world, and I explore this through media and textiles. I am interested in how touch is beheld in the body, particularly how invisible and visible histories precipitate an effect throughout our bodies. The viewer and video art share an interactive quality of exchange, as the viewing experience is synesthetic; the intellect, emotional, subconscious, conscious are understood as being connected and totally implicated. This poses an erotic element within viewing, in which haptic images and multisensory media invite the viewer as a participant to dissolve their subjectivity, by engaging in a bodily contact with image. The unstable territories that I investigate through media frustrate the rational, and rely on other senses of empathy and understanding, within the sympathetic relationship between viewer and cinematic image. In my work, I use video-stills as an act of pause and resistance. To stop a moment in time is to reflect on what we are consuming visually. During my residency in Iceland, I realized that my processes of weaving and collecting lupine from the environment surrounding the residency to naturally dye with were moments of pause, of contemplation and slow reflection. I see my video stills as an extension of this practice, in which I perform a hypersexualized female victim in the horror film, *Suspiria*, directed by Dario Argento. I decided to print these on sensual fabrics, seducing viewers to touch and caress the images and conversely the female body captured in the image. In my current practice, I am exploring how horror has the potential to affect our bodies totally through video and sound while promoting violence on female bodies and eroticizing this violence.



### They Will Hollow Me Out

Video still of video performance in They Will Hollow Me Out  
digital archival print on velvet  
photo by Justine Sawicz

# Kristin Hoelscher-Schacker

United States

At the Textile Center, I practiced materials exploration and experimentation, expanding media and stretching limitations. The North Atlantic inspired me to make knotted nets with the same process used to make fishing equipment; I created both geometric forms and inspirational swirling objects with the same simple movements. Réttir inspired me to spin and stitch with wool and horsehair. The landscape let me play scientist in the dye lab with artists who shared their experiments and processes with natural dyes. The weavers (twill? what does that mean?) inspired a series of photoweavings; recombined images with a new point of view.

I came to the Textile Center looking for time and space and inspiration, and found all in abundance. I came for two months burdened with the materials and ideas I thought I must have, and found inspiration in materials previous residents had left behind and the magic of wool and horsehair and dyes from the Icelandic landscape. I came as a individual and discovered I am actually a member of a wonderful community of artists from all over the world. I left the Textile Center renewed and re-energized, in awe of the women and men I met there and reminded of my own skill and worth.



Materials Exploration - torn fabric strips

size variable  
cotton, wool, silk  
torn strips, hand and machine pieced  
photo by Kristin Hoelscher-Schacker



Net 1 / Öldu Hnútar

72 x 72 in / 48 x 16 x 23 in  
cotton, wool, silk  
natural dye, knotted net, hand twisted rope  
photo by Kristin Hoelscher-Schacker



## Blaine Davis

United States

Spending September at the Textile Center was a wonderful experience for me. My primary purpose in going was to work on tapestry with a focus on craftsmanship. I was also interested in spending time someplace quite different from home and with people from all over the world.

I'd say that I accomplished most of my goals, but more than that I found a different way of working, both in technique and inspiration. Previous work centered mostly on taking an image that I or someone else had created and interpreting it in this different medium. Now I found myself responding to the environment, directly using what I could see, even just out the window and becoming both more disciplined and abstract at the same time.

Who knows what will stick and what won't, but certainly the memories are there and so too is the desire to create pieces that are both well-constructed and beautiful.



Blönduós tapestry #4

10.5 x 7.75 in  
wool  
tapestry  
photo by Blaine Davis



Blönduós tapestry #1

13.5 x 12 in  
wool  
tapestry  
photo by Blaine Davis

# Mirjam Hemström

Sweden

Between traditional craft and digital tools and with an interest in spatial perception, I weave. I see my weaving as yarn architecture. Horizontals and verticals interlacing and creating surfaces, three-dimensional patterns building microscopic - or big scale - spatialities. Rebecca Solnit writes that "a thread now most often means a line of conversation via e-mail or other electronic means, but thread must have been an even more compelling metaphor when most people witnessed or did the women's work that is spinning." This repetitive gesture, that turns a cloudy mass of fiber into lines with which the world can be tied together, has something enchanting and existential over it. The verb to spin first meant just this act of making, then evolved to mean anything turning rapidly, and then it came to mean telling a tale. There is something about how the thread holds a promise of eternity.

During my residency, I got the opportunity to spin a collection of yarns. I was introduced to Icelandic wool; everything from sheep round-up to mini-mills to carding, spinning, twisting and finishing. I was mesmerized by the rhythm of the work of the hand, thrilled by how close I got to the material and as a result, how much I felt for my finished piece of work: a 2 x 2 meters big canvas consisting of 20 x 20 centimeter big, broken twill woven swatches. A map of different textures and natural shades.

## Swatches

200 x 200 cm  
Icelandic wool  
hand spun yarn, weft faced broken twill  
photo by Mirjam Hemström



# Tuija Hansen

Canada

During my residence, I turned to plant materials and traditional textile practices: “slow art” as a reaction to the “instant” gratification demanded by 21st-century society. While exploring methods of working with timeless materials using traditional skillsets I refined my palette and began work on the “Growth” series.

“Growth” explores the concept of recreating slow-growing crustose lichen via tactile processes: hand-dyeing with foraged plants, hand-felting, and handstitching Icelandic wool. Imitating a natural cycle of lichen growth using these methods, “Growth” simultaneously attempts to speed up the cycle while recreating the untamed patterns of lichen found on rocks, concrete, lava, and other often uninhabitable locations. In one of the three stitchings, the lichen is stitched into submission and bound into an embroidery hoop. Another stitching hangs having escaped the embroidery hoop, and the third explores the idea of stitching left to develop its own patterns of growth over time, attempting to overtake the embroidery hoop altogether.

While exploring the flora of Blönduós, I dyed wool, silk, and hemp using: angelica; lupin; northern dock; yarrow; downy birch; Iceland moss; lichen; and indigo. The resulting palette of colours proved irresistible to work with, inspiring the hemp piecework for a quilt as well.







OPPOSITE

Growth 1; Crustose Lichen  
Growth 3; Moss Escape

12 x 12 cm each  
wool  
plant-dyed, felted, stitched

THIS PAGE

Growth 2; Overtaking

20 x 35 cm  
wool  
plant-dyed, felted, stitched

all photos by Tuija Hansen

## Arielle Walker

New Zealand

Arriving in Iceland, I was struck by the instant similarities and stark differences between our islands. Aotearoa/New Zealand and Iceland are both beautiful, rugged, volcanic island-countries, first settled one-thousand years ago. However our native plants (and therefore local plant dyes) are very different.

I used my time at the Textile Center to capture colour from the Icelandic landscape, drawing dyes from the plants around the River Blanda and using lopi to knit and stitch together abstract maps. I then photographed these textile objects placed back into the landscape they were attempting to map or describe: the landscape itself remained untouched, but the documentation is forever altered by this intervention. These drawings are a further attempt within my practice to engage with the translation of tactile materials into an idea or story without resorting to written language.

Over the course of the month, my brilliant fellow residents and I experienced the full spectrum of Icelandic nature at its best. As the weather shifted from bright sunshine to snow, we were visited by icebergs, seals, minke whales and the Aurora Borealis, and participated in the annual rettír. My only regret is not having enough time - I already look forward to returning.





## Gluggaveður

55 x 100 cm  
vintage NZ wool blanket, local Icelandic plant dyes, indigo  
machine-stitched patchwork, locally foraged natural dye, indigo, 35mm film  
photos by Arielle Walker

# Alice Kaps

Australia

One of the main concepts that influences my textile work is the environmental impact of humans over consumption, and in a way, our over creation. Where I can I try to find second hand or discarded materials to work with. During my time at the Textile Center I explored working with a new material, discarded monofilament that I had found back home in Australia and during my travels in Iceland. Some of these plastic pieces were found on beaches and around water ways where they can have a devastating effect on marine animals and birds.

Attending the Textile Center Residency was an incredible opportunity to develop my craft. Being surrounded by many incredible artists in such a beautiful location gave me so much inspiration for ideas and techniques that I will be able to use in the future.



Untitled (Monofilament Experiment)

various sizes  
discarded monofilament  
crochet  
photo by Alice Kaps





Untitled (Monofilament Experiment)

10 x 10 x 4 cm each  
discarded monofilament  
crochet  
photo by Alice Kaps



## Marled Mader

Germany

This was my third time at the Icelandic Textile Center in Blönduós. As in the years before I worked on ancient textiles, this time a (possible) shawl based on the textile remnants in the grave of the Blue Lady, a Viking Age grave in East Iceland.

I started with the basics: sorting, cleaning and preparing wool from Icelandic sheep, hand-spinning, dyeing and weaving, and working on a tablet woven border for the shawl. I also wove a fabric for the reproduction of Viking age mittens in a special techniques.

The time at the Icelandic Textile Center was again very inspiring and we had a great group working and living together. Besides the art work we also explored the landscape in the North of Iceland!



Fabric for mittens from Viking Age Iceland

45 x 120 cm  
Icelandic wool  
handwoven with pile weave  
photo by Marled Mader



Viking shawl

80 x 150 cm  
Icelandic wool  
handspun and handwoven  
photo by Marled Mader

## Bianca Elisabeth Ing. Summer

Austria

I am interested in historical textiles and last summer I took the chance to join a historical weaving project in Iceland. There I decided to weave a shawl with plant dyed wool and diamond twill. We had a fantastic time in Blönduós, met a lot of interesting people and learned new textile techniques.

Icelandic shawl

70 x 160 cm

wool

handwoven

photo by Bianca Elisabeth Summer



# Shoko Tsuji

France

I came to Iceland right after spending three weeks in Morocco, mostly in the Sahara desert. I couldn't sense at first what guided me to these two seemingly opposite places, but I guess I needed to experience polarity and contrast, both in the environnement and within myself. Eventually, beyond the cold and heat, wet and dry, light and shadow, I found a new awareness to color. And the Icelandic colors seen in the vast landscapes, rainbows and northern lights were of an ethereal spectrum.

So I brought to Blönduós a book about colors and some very bright pigments from Morocco, and started playing with them. Which was awkward at first as I never was a color person. Also seeing the other artists making very fine natural plant dyed colors often made me question my saturated tones. But my growing interest in the symbolic meaning and existence of color rays gradually made me relate to color as light and frequencies rather than from an aesthetic standpoint. I ended up making a column of chakras, our energetic wheels which vibrate at different wavelengths, as part of a series which revolves around the kundalini healing process.



Northern wheels, Southern wheels

40 x 90 cm  
linen, silk, Icelandic fish leather, Moroccan pigments,  
silk/cotton/metallic threads, beads, sequins  
hand embroidery (Luneville hook and needle), paint  
photos by Shoko Tsuji





Bridget Low

Belgium

a flitry horse lady walks into a bar...



queen of texas

77 x 147 cm  
acrylic and Icelandic wool  
tapestry weaving

photo by my iphone camera's panorama feature



green in blue, stable/frame, body no tale

77 x 147 cm each  
acrylic and Icelandic wool  
tapestry weaving  
photo by my iphone camera's panorama feature

## Britynn Davis

United States

During this residency I was interested in exploring the changing qualities of light on the coastline around Blönduós. I made daily sketches and watercolors on my morning walks during the residency and combined them into one composite weaving.



**Morning Haze**  
(Installation view and detail)

4 x 9 ft  
Lopi yarn, deconstructed wool sweaters, cottolin yarn  
TC2 Jacquard weaving  
photos by Britynn Davis

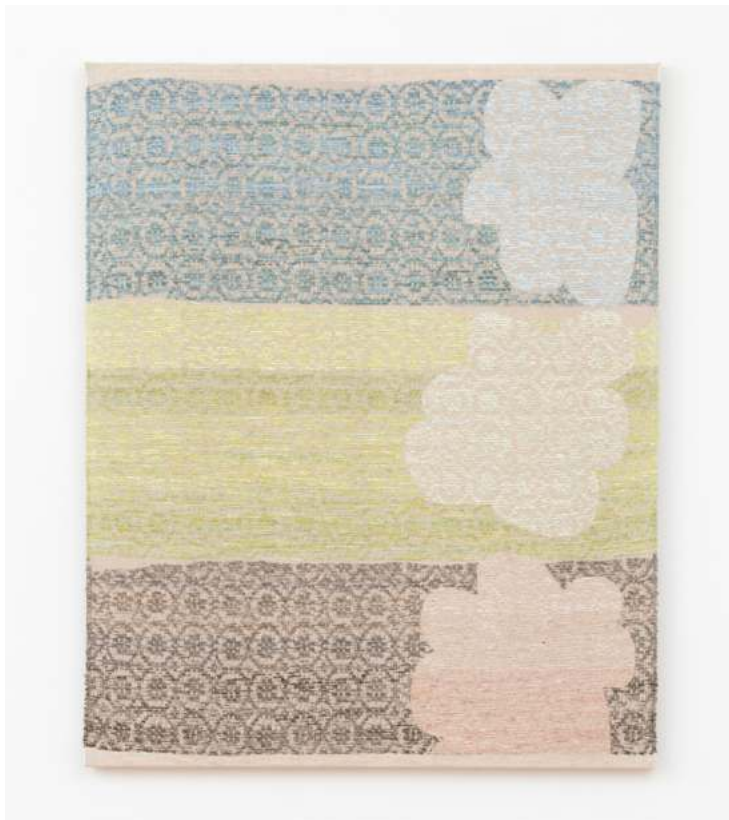




## Christy Matson

United States

I travelled to Blönduós for the second time to work on the TC2 Jacquard loom. I love the solitude, quiet and focused work time. I came with specific projects in mind to accomplish but found that over the course of my stay I was drawn to working with more and more color - the long periods of darkness were starting to get to me and I was craving the color.



Untitled (After Andy)

52.5 x 43 in  
Acrylic paint on paper, wool, cotton, linen

woven on TC-2  
photo courtesy of Volume Gallery



**Overshot Variation II**

43.50 x 35.75 in  
deadstock overspun linen, acrylic and spray paint on paper,  
Einband Icelandic wool, cotton, linen  
woven on TC-2  
photo courtesy of Volume Gallery







photos by  
 Kathleen Vaughan (opposite page, bottom left)  
 Textile Center (opposite page, bottom right and this page, top left)  
 Cornelia Theimer Gardella (this page, top right)  
 Samuel Schacker (this page, bottom right)  
 Kurt Gardella (all other photos)

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