

Do surfaces matter in shaping how we experience and connect with spaces and objects we use?

Surface Matters emerges from this question in a time of pre-packaged food, digital touch screens and anonymous neutrality of mass produced goods, where spaces we inhabit, too, are marked by growing uniformity, diminishing sense of tactility and dominance of synthetic materials. The project considers surfaces as more than just visual finishes, presenting them as relational interfaces where materials, making, maker, landscape and user intersect, expanding on how spaces are conceived and experienced.

With an interdisciplinary approach between textiles and interior architecture, the project focuses on two natural materials: soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) and Norwegian wool (*Norsk Kvit Sau and Spælsau*). These materials share a layered relationship in the Norwegian landscape, where soft rush is recognised as a weed that spreads across grazing pastures for sheep.

Bringing them together shifts this tension into a material dialogue, through a process driven by making as a form of enquiry. The two materials are explored through hand weaving and felting as surface construction techniques, allowing material behaviour to guide the outcome, revealing how surfaces emerge through elements such as resistance, friction, heat, moisture and interlacements. Through the use of these local, abundant and overlooked natural materials, the project invites the appreciation of the qualities of irregularity, organicity and the presence of the handmade in our surrounding spaces.

The explorations culminate in an interactive installation consisting of ten objects that functions as an enquiry into how surfaces mediate perception, touch, and spatial awareness. Rather than presenting a fixed solution, the installation proposes a space of attention and encounter, through its surface qualities and form that aim to engage humans through the sense of touch along with the sense of sight with guided movement around the objects. The installation invites visitors to wonder about the materials, the making, the maker, and to saunter in the details, the textures and the imaginative form of the objects constituting the space.