

A body that remembers

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Inspiration

MY ABEBE

WHAT IS ABEBE ?

a well-worn soft toy that has accompanied me over many years, as a conceptual starting point, I aim to investigate how wear, damage and repair can be understood as visual evidence of care rather than deterioration.



Concept

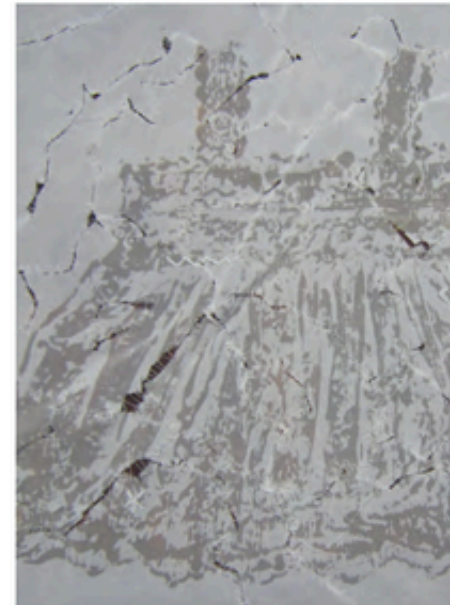
Target

This project is positioned within the context of contemporary surface design and print-led textiles, with relevance to high-end fashion and interior textiles that value narrative, material sensitivity and craftsmanship. Through market research into design studios and brands that emphasise material-led storytelling and emotional longevity, I have identified a growing interest in textiles that move away from fast consumption and instead celebrate repair, imperfection and emotional value.

MY WORK AIMS TO SIT WITHIN A DESIGN-LED, CONCEPT-DRIVEN MARKET, APPEALING TO CONSUMERS WHO VALUE TEXTILES NOT ONLY AS DECORATIVE SURFACES BUT AS MEANINGFUL, LONG-LASTING OBJECTS. THE PROJECT ALSO ALIGNS WITH CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSIONS AROUND SUSTAINABILITY, PARTICULARLY EMOTIONAL DURABILITY AND EXTENDED PRODUCT LIFECYCLES.

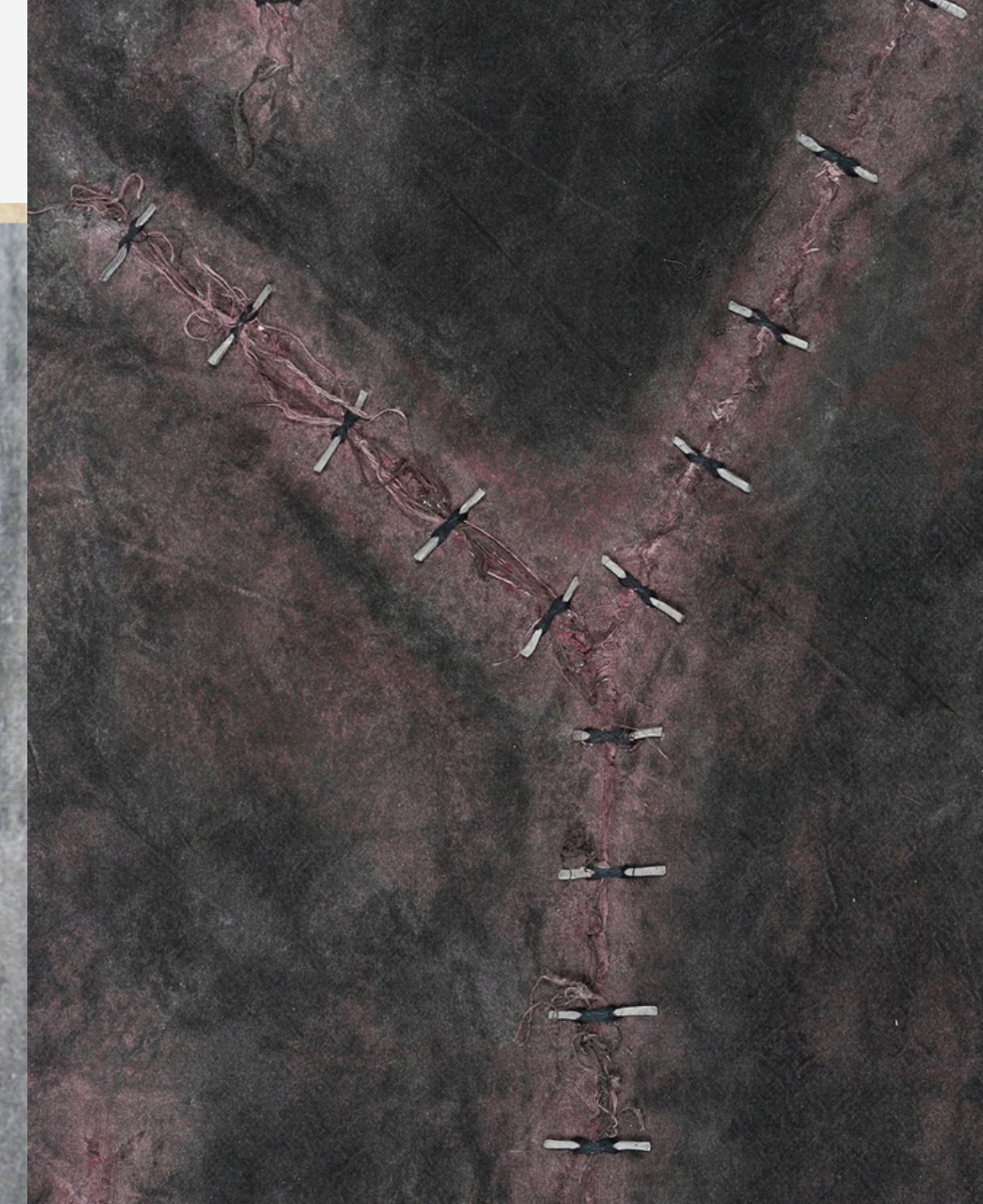
CONCEPTUALLY, THE PROJECT IS MORE ALIGNED WITH INTERIOR AND SURFACE-LED TEXTILES, AS IT FOCUSES ON LONG-TERM CONTACT, MEMORY AND MATERIAL SURFACES. HOWEVER, I AM ALSO INTERESTED IN TESTING HOW THE SAME PRINT LANGUAGE COULD TRANSLATE INTO FASHION-RELATED APPLICATIONS THROUGH VISUALISATION, WITHOUT THE PROJECT BECOMING GARMENT-FOCUSED. THE PROJECT IS PRIMARILY INTERIOR-LED, AS IT EXPLORES SURFACE, TIME AND EMOTIONAL DURABILITY. FASHION VISUALISATION IS USED SELECTIVELY TO TEST SCALE AND VERSATILITY, RATHER THAN AS THE MAIN OUTCOME.

Contextual Research



ABOVE LEFT & MAIN IMAGE: HEALING SERIES
MATERIALS: CALICO, LEAD WIRE
SIZE: EACH 0.4 x 1.93 METRES
PHOTOGRAPHS: THE ARTIST

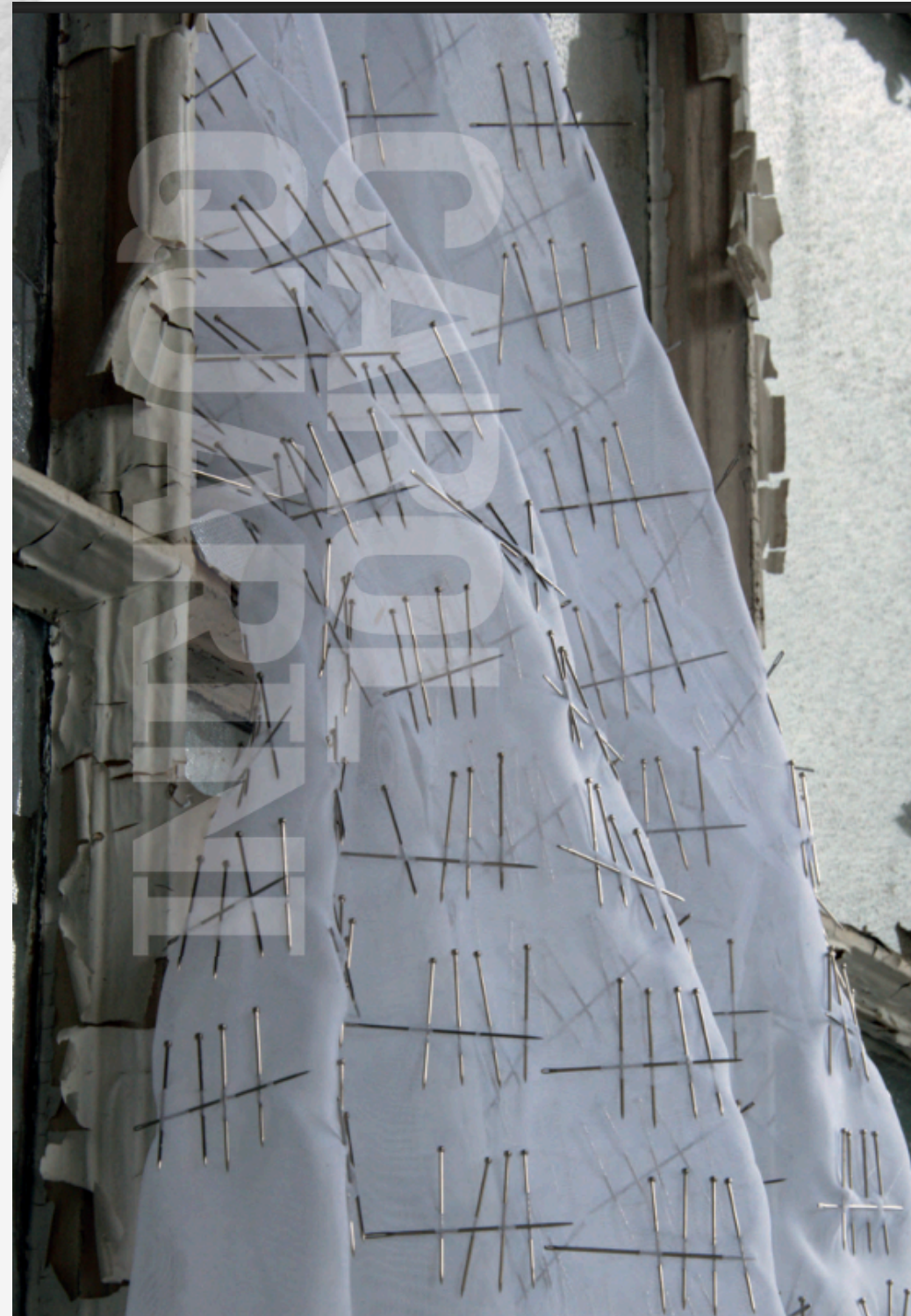
ABOVE RIGHT: FRAGMENTED MEMORY
MATERIALS: SILK VISCOSE ROMAN GEORGETTE
SIZE: 0.45 x 0.50 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: THE ARTIST



In recent years, textile practice has increasingly been positioned as a medium capable of holding memory, emotion and time. Rather than functioning purely as decorative surface, textiles are now often understood as “recording bodies” — surfaces that absorb traces of touch, wear, repair and emotional attachment.

This shift is particularly visible within contemporary textile art and surface-led design, where material ageing, imperfection and tactility are embraced as part of the visual language. Such approaches align with broader discussions around emotional durability, sustainability and long-term relationships with objects.

This project sits within this context, exploring how surface damage, repair and softness can be translated into abstract print systems that communicate memory without literal representation.



CAROL QUARINI: EMBEDDED MEMORY

This work explores the process by which memories are embedded into cloth and the fabric of a building.

The condition of the six ‘windows’ in this installation suggests the gradual immurement of the industrious needlewoman trapped in the room by domesticity, whose thoughts are revealed in the fragments of cross stitch samplers framed on the walls. The net curtain is used as a metaphor for the duality of home as sanctuary and prison in its combined role as airy, transparent furnishing and claustrophobic barrier to light. The first curtain is pierced by pins and needles in the traditional tally pattern of counting units of five, but these marks also suggest a prisoner marking time, while the misuse of sewing equipment suggests a subversion of the domestic. In succeeding windows the tally marks metamorphose into chalk marks on board, then chalk on brick, and finally they disappear completely, suggesting the windows are insidiously becoming blocked up as cloth turns to stone, sanctuary becomes prison, and memories become part of the fabric of the room.

Beside the ‘windows’ hang three small net curtains, embellished with tambour lace trims that include ambiguous phrases, such as ‘I can see through you’. They suggest that the fabric of the curtain acts as a silent witness in the home, retaining memories. However, all is not as it seems. Photographic images of the curtains, taken in sites within Salts Mill, suggest that the curtains have agency and are playing a more active role in the entombment. Rather than retaining memories, the curtains seem to be discussing the events, implying they played an active part in them. Most tellingly, the wording on one of the curtains reads ‘Appearances can be deceptive’.

Rather than revealing the gradual solidification of memory with the passage of time we seem to be witnessing its gradual erasure and destruction of the evidence.

TITLE: MARKING TIME [detail]
MATERIALS: NET, PINS AND NEEDLES
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH

https://research.uca.ac.uk/1622/1/Cloth_Memory_book.pdf



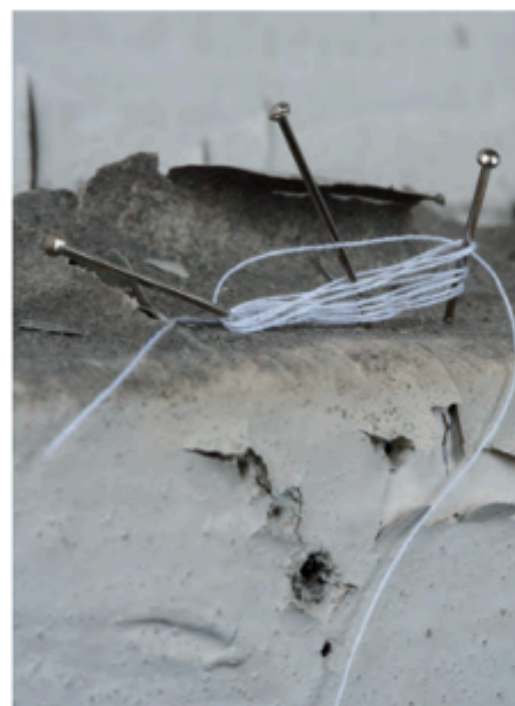
ABOVE: PIN WITH RED THREAD [detail]
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



BELOW: APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEPTIVE
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



ABOVE: I NEVER LAID A FINGER ON HER [detail
of tambour lace] **SIZE:** 0.6 x 0.6 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: THE ARTIST



BELOW: PINS WITH WHITE THREAD [detail]
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH



TITLE: MARKING TIME [detail]
MATERIALS: NET, PINS AND NEEDLES
SIZE: IMAGE 1.0 x 0.66 METRES
PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SMITH

https://research.uca.ac.uk/1622/1/Cloth_Memory_book.pdf

CLOTH AND MEMORY, SALTS MILL, SUMMER 2012

Cloth, in its intimate relationship with our body bears the marks of our being, both on the surface and embedded within the structure. The strains, stresses, stains and smells we impress upon this second skin form an archive of our most intimate life. At the same time, cloth is also the membrane through which we establish our sense of 'becoming', and formalise our relationship with the external world, while the fabric remorselessly records the evidence of those interactions. Cloth holds the memory of our time and connects us with memories of other times and other places.

The three artists in this exhibition have developed these ideas around cloth and memory through their own concerns and media. All visited Salts Mill and Saltaire and have created their work as a response to the history of the place: the memory of cloth and the making of cloth that has seeped into the fabric of the building. Their works reference the importance of cloth as the accompanying witness to our life and the lives of others.

Beverly-Ayling Smith is using cloth – its wear, tear and embellishment – as a metaphor for the stages of mourning we may encounter as we move from loss to acceptance. Carol Quarini's installation transforms the domestic net curtain from witness to complicit malefactor in the hidden lives of others no longer present. Bob White is making paintings of cloth and clothing as a carrier of discovered memory that becomes embedded within the cloth of the painting itself.

The narrative contained within the work of all three artists is engaging and ambiguous, inviting us to bring our own stories to the table, our own memories activated by their attentiveness to the surface, structure, fold and crease of the cloth.

This exhibition is the first of two; Cloth and Memory 2 will take place in 2013.

LESLEY MILLAR: CLOTH& MEMORY CREATIVE DIRECTOR

PROFESSOR OF TEXTILE CULTURE, UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

https://research.uca.ac.uk/1622/1/Cloth_Memory_book.pdf



PHOTOGRAPH: BEVERLY AYLING-SMITH



<https://www.instagram.com/p/DP0ha7yDKUz/>

TEXTILE ART REDEFINED AT SAATCHI GALLERY PRESENTS A WIDE RANGE OF CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE-BASED PRACTICES, INCLUDING EMBROIDERY, WOVEN SURFACES, FABRIC SCULPTURE AND MIXED-MEDIA INSTALLATIONS. THE EXHIBITION CHALLENGES TRADITIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF TEXTILES AS CRAFT-BASED OR SECONDARY, POSITIONING THEM INSTEAD AS CENTRAL TO CONTEMPORARY VISUAL CULTURE.

MANY WORKS WITHIN THE EXHIBITION FOCUS ON MATERIAL EXPERIMENTATION, VISIBLE PROCESS AND SURFACE IRREGULARITY. STITCHING, LAYERING AND DISTRESSED FABRICS ARE USED NOT AS IMPERFECTIONS, BUT AS INTENTIONAL VISUAL ELEMENTS THAT CARRY MEANING.

THIS EXHIBITION PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT CONTEXTUAL REFERENCE FOR MY PROJECT, AS IT DEMONSTRATES HOW TEXTILE SURFACES CAN FUNCTION AS EXPRESSIVE, CONCEPT-DRIVEN LANGUAGES RATHER THAN PURELY FUNCTIONAL OR DECORATIVE OUTCOMES.



MYTHS, DREAMS AND NEW REALITIES WILL SPOTLIGHT 13 EMERGING ARTISTS FROM ACROSS THE ASIAN DIASPORA, WHO EACH REIMAGINE CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH PERSONAL MYTHOLOGIES AND VISIONARY MATERIAL PRACTICES. THE EXHIBITION WILL PRESENT BOLD NEW WORKS ACROSS PAINTING, SCULPTURE, TEXTILES AND CERAMICS.

FEATURED ARTISTS: RABIA S. AKHTAR, HOA DUNG CLERGET, WOO JIN JOO, WINK KING MOE, MARCOS KUEH, HANNAH LIM, KUNIKO MAEDA, HEMASEH MANAWI RAD, VARSHGA PREMARASA, SATO SUGAMOTO, LULU WANG, CAROLINE WONG, LIAN ZHANG



ACROSS CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE DISCOURSE, REPAIR AND WEAR ARE INCREASINGLY VIEWED AS SIGNS OF CARE RATHER THAN DETERIORATION. PRACTICES SUCH AS VISIBLE MENDING, PATCHING AND STITCHING HIGHLIGHT THE EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND OBJECTS.

THIS PERSPECTIVE REFRAMES DAMAGE AS EVIDENCE OF LONGEVITY, ATTACHMENT AND USE. IN A DESIGN CONTEXT, THESE QUALITIES OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE TO FAST CONSUMPTION, SUPPORTING MORE EMOTIONALLY DURABLE TEXTILE PRODUCTS.

MY PROJECT DRAWS FROM THIS IDEOLOGY BY TREATING WORN SURFACES, DISTORTION AND STITCHING AS VISUAL INSPIRATION FOR PRINT DEVELOPMENT, TRANSFORMING THEM INTO REPEAT PATTERNS AND ABSTRACT COMPOSITIONS.

Boards

Concept Board



Concept Board



Concept Board



Concept Board



2 Colorway Board



Memory / Flesh



Bone
#F2E6D8



Dust Pink
#D8A6A6



Burnt Lace
#C58F7A



Warm Beige
#C9A27E



Deep Blood Red
#F8EE28



Soft Mhcl
#B81E2D



Soft Rust
#B45A3C



Trauma / Repair



Cold Grey
#D7D9D8



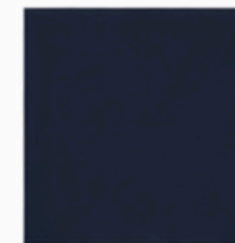
Denim Blue
#4A5E7A



Storm Blue
#6E7F93



Muted Teal
#6A8C8C



Ink Navy
#17CADA



Ink Navy
#1F2A3A

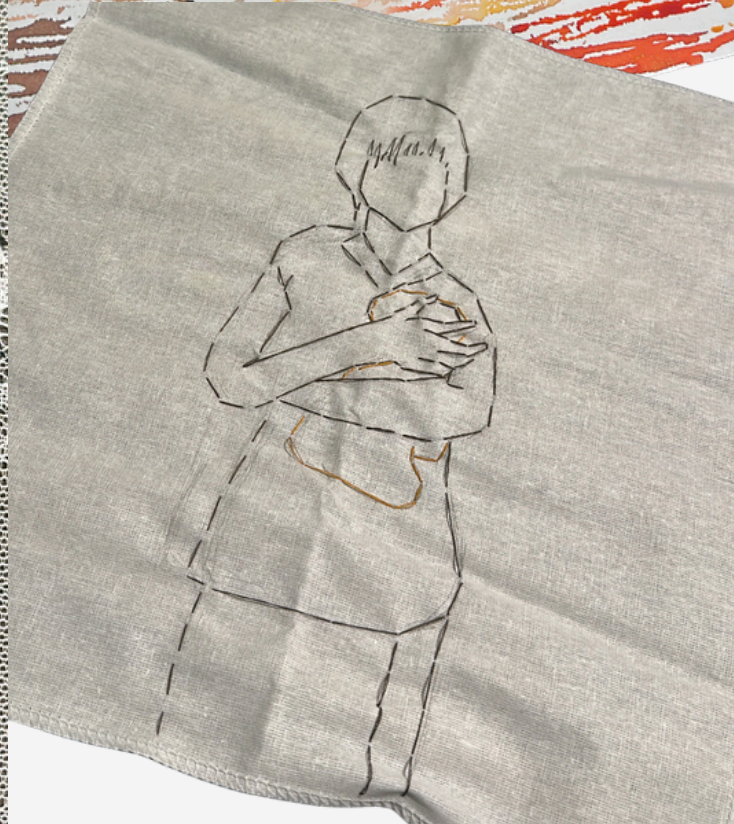
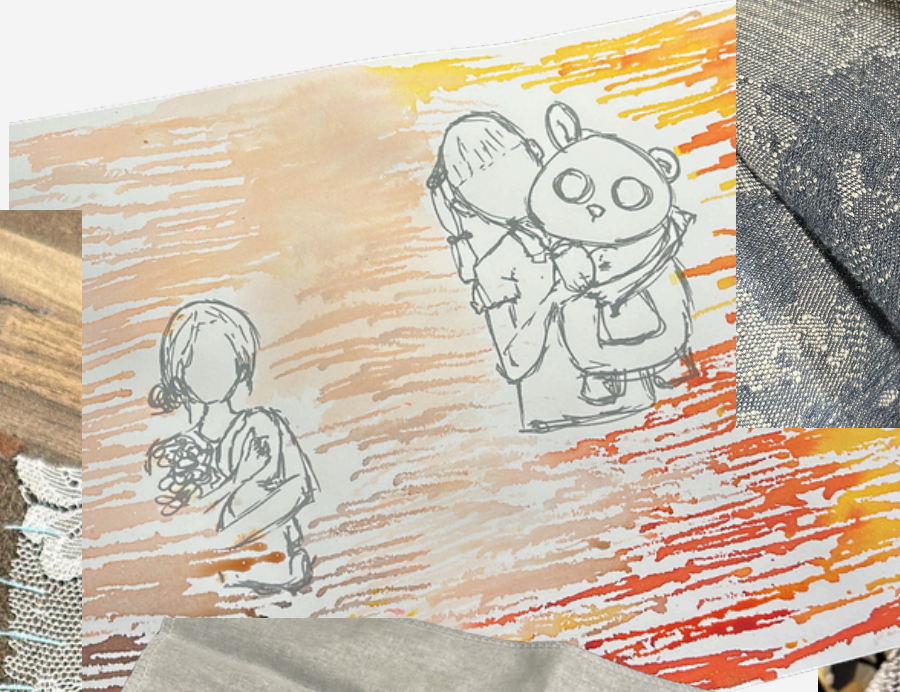


Steel Blue
#8FA3B7



Working Process

Samples



THE TECHNIQUE OF STITCHING AND EMBROIDERY IS USED TO PIECE TOGETHER RECYCLED AND UNUSED SECOND-HAND FABRICS, CREATING A DISTRESSED PATCHWORK STYLE THAT EVOKES A SENSE OF TACTILE COMPANIONSHIP.

Sample Visualization

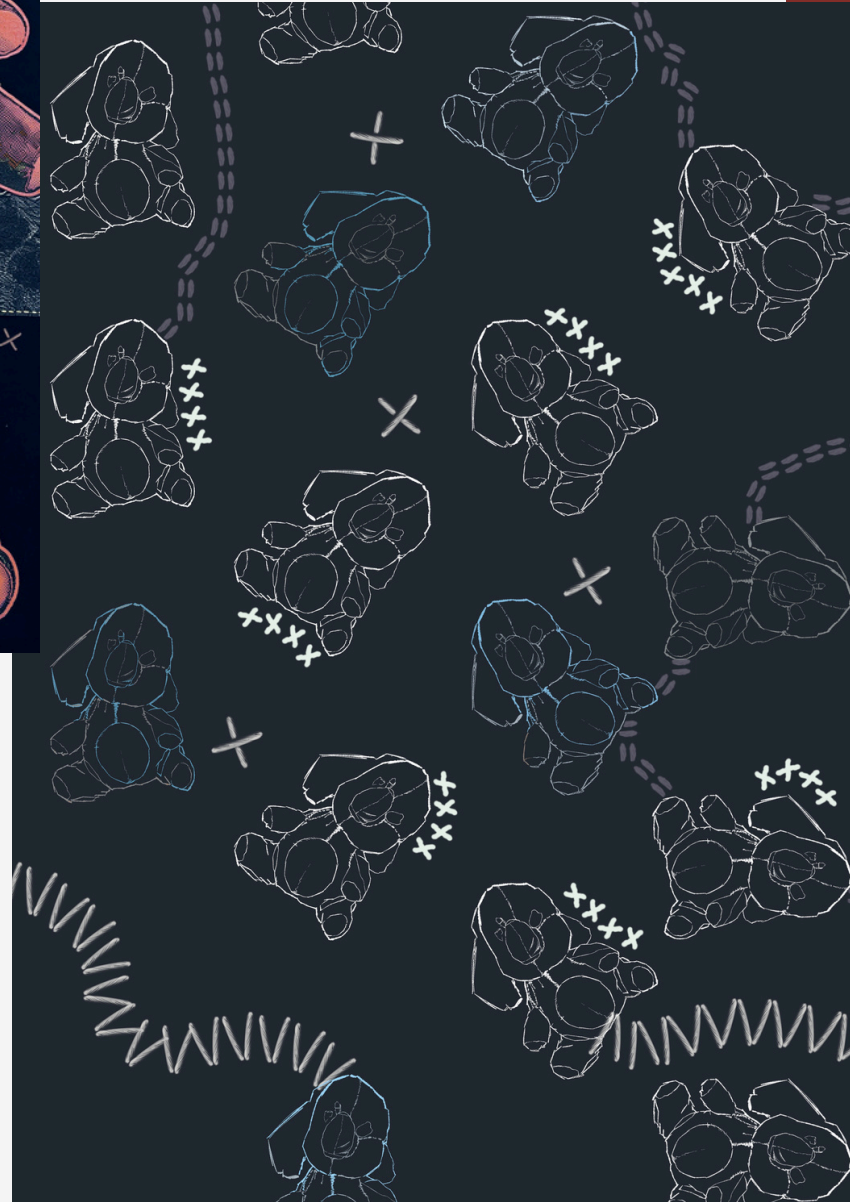
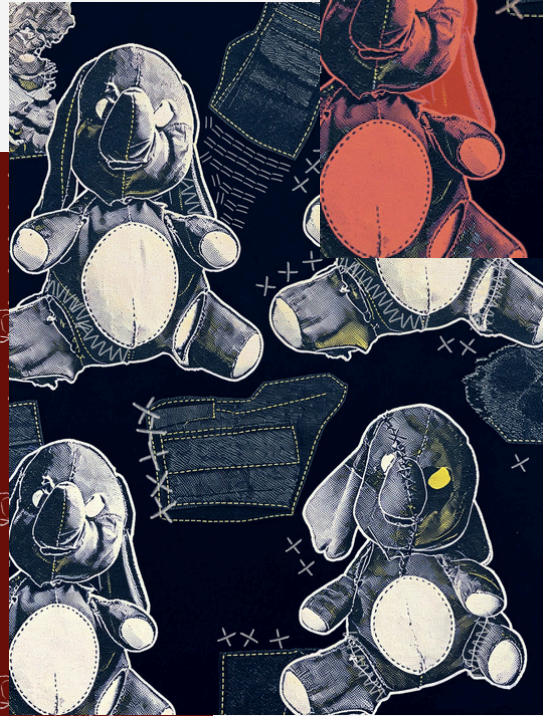
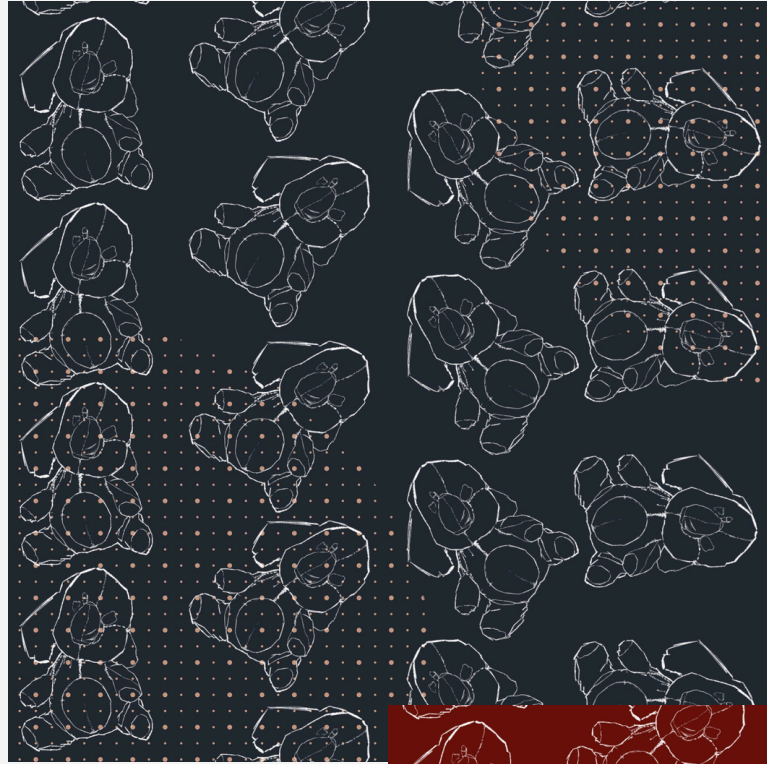
Fashionable makeovers from recycled and unused old clothes.



Sample Visualization



Repeat Pattern



The interior design uses Abebe as the main motif.

Thank You

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