
Senior Projects Spring 2016

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

Spring 2016

With Every Fiber

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Recommended Citation

Calloway, Catherine Megan, "With Every Fiber" (2016). *Senior Projects Spring 2016*. 172.
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With Every Fiber

Textiles and craft are steeped in histories of cultural production and identity. They extend image-making and storytelling to forge an exchange between artist and viewer. Through this material, we communicate intimate concepts that cannot be expressed solely through words. Weavings, textiles, garments, and craft works are powerful representations of those who made them. They are more than just cultural byproducts or artifacts, but tactile manifestations of people. They define us in their ability to wrap, protect, and tell stories of their user and maker. Commonly understood to function in relation to the body, displaying and covering it, fiber as a medium has an almost inherent reference to bodies.

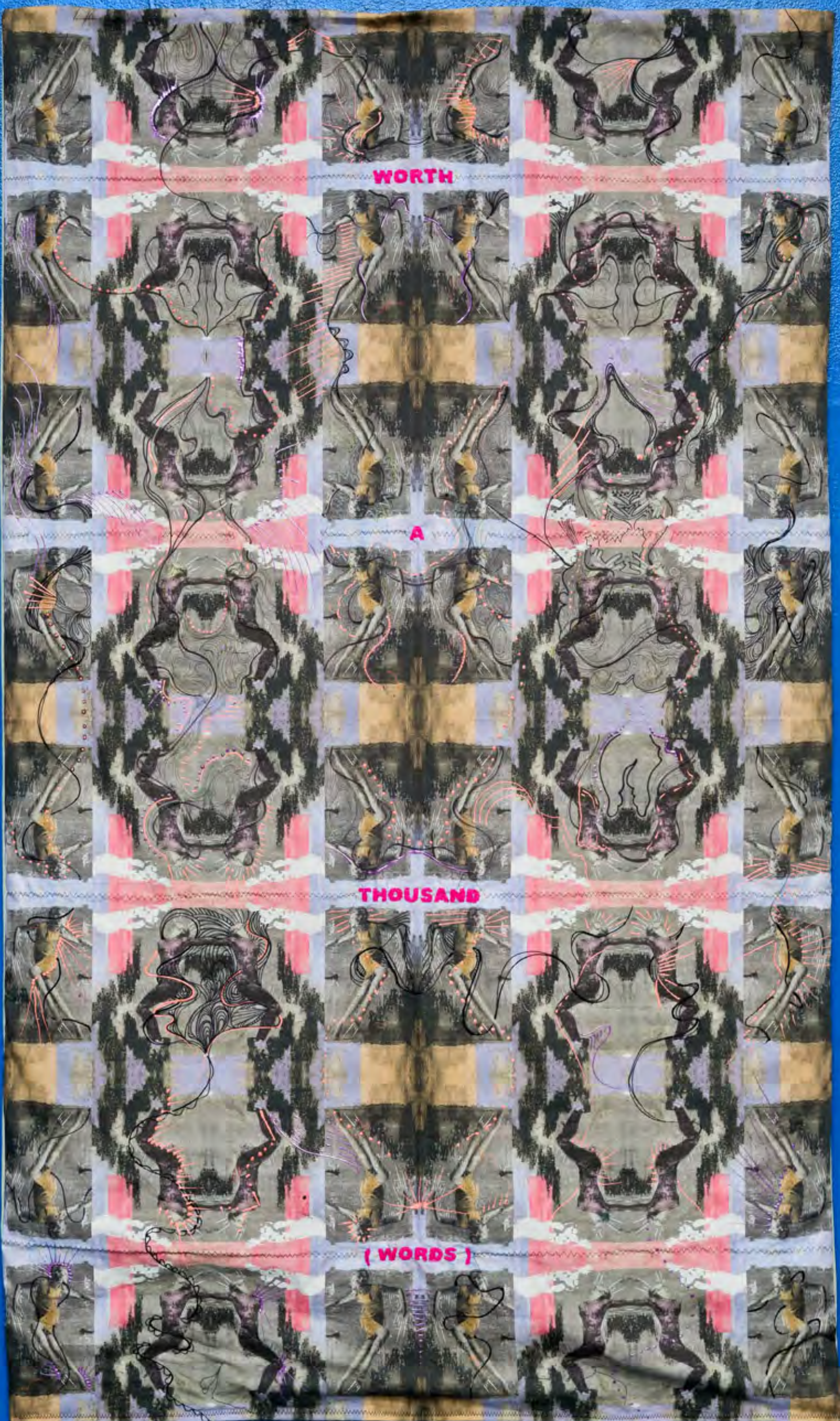
I began to examine the relationship between bodies and fiber by considering the act of making. Through the manipulation and shaping of materials, the human body becomes a tool, using strands of fiber to define itself, space, and create structures through laborious, often monotonous processes of weaving, sewing, knotting. In this temporal and spatial process, hands toil to accumulate tiny fragments in space, creating something grand. Fiber works, imbued with physicality, become tactile documentations of time and energy—a remnant of experience.

I sought to create woven garments that challenged perceptions of these practices. I treated them as sculptures and complicated their figurative aspect by removing utilitarianism, altering size and scale so they became forms unto themselves. I hoped to alter interpretations and understanding. I eschewed categories of dress, building shelters and forms that imply an ungendered body. To alter expectations of the medium and craft itself, I used unorthodox materials such as latex, fencing, and metals, alongside traditional fibers. The use of traditional fibers proved important as I considered how to push the medium beyond the confines of certain

denigrating ideologies. This was not a didactic endeavor, but an acknowledgement of fiber as a valid medium.

I considered the process of craft, in which bodies manipulate fiber, and began to explore the way in which fiber manipulates bodies. As sculptures that envelope the human form, each garment mandates how a body may move, engendering a performance in which each entity asserts its limits and capabilities. Suspended and clustered in a labyrinth, the garments also effect the viewer, forcing their bodies to navigate around the forms, commanding space and recognition as animate effigies. The work explores the garments' ability to abstract bodies and stand alone as abstracted visual forms. They establish a conversation between color, abstraction, movement, and the craft process. This is most explicit in the video, as the garments distort a human form and are themselves abstracted into visual forms. The patterning effect refers to the repetition found in the structure of the garments and opens them to a more formal dialogue.

In many ways, these garments are documentations of myself, my time, and the challenges I have faced this past year. Each knot, stitch, and weave express my labor, frustration, and very being. As remnants of my repeated gestures, they hang in space as suspended traces of my hand. I sought to create with a direct sense of the hand, redefining the tactility of sculpture through this craft. This work seeks to reflect a more generous definition of art, subverting the visual hierarchies that subjugate craft, textiles, and garments. I sought to create work that could straddle traditional categories and merge the value systems that separate art from craft and design. Using such a physically and emotionally demanding practice, I sought to emphasize the impact of fiber on the human body, demonstrate its ability to forge human connections, and acknowledge its power as a mode of image-making.



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