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Foreword

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Foreword

Sophia Malik and Penny Macbeth

The Textile Crafts team at the University of Huddersfield have worked on a range of projects with Jeanette Appleton many of which have had international exposure, such as 'Felt Crossing Borders' and 'Through the Surface'. Both projects explored combinations of industrial and hand crafted felt processes. For 'Through the Surface', Jeanette produced a vast felt installation pushing the potential of needle punch felt on an industrial scale. This piece of work highlighted a new spectrum of possibilities for further development.

A long term ambition of the Textile Crafts course team had been to have an artist in residence: someone who could enhance the teaching and learning environment and promote practice based research. A unique 0.5 post was created which combined teaching with research focused on an intensive period of making. Our joint aims were to produce a body of work which explored the boundaries between craft and mass-production utilising processes such as needle punched felt, hand felt and digital embroidery technologies.

Jeanette's textile work originates from a rich and varied body of visual research and she has brought this intuitive and playful approach to her making when exploring the range of technologies available. This has culminated in a major collection of work, which has fully utilised industrial processes, yet still embodies a craft aesthetic.

'It is this type of intelligent playing that is forging original works, new discoveries and modes of expression specific to our era.'ⁱ

Jeanette has brought many things to the student group that have come into contact with her. She has emphasised the importance of drawing and the depth of investigation needed to enable them to establish an identity for their own practice. She has instilled a quiet confidence in the students, encouraging a rigorous and professional approach to their craft, whilst allowing a unique insight into the life of a professional textile artist.

'Jeanette encouraged me to trust my intuitive creative abilities. In drawing classes I truly discovered the significance of mark making, which is now a prominent feature in my design work.'ⁱⁱ

We feel especially privileged that Jeanette has been able to work within the Design Department at the University of Huddersfield on this unique piece of research and hope that the touring exhibition of this major new work will attract a wider audience to this aspect of textiles.

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ⁱ McCarty C. and McQuaid M. 'Structure Et Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles', The Museum of Modern Art, New York 2000

ⁱⁱ Amanda McLenny BA (Hons) Textile Crafts graduate 2007