

Wild Things: A Collection of Handwoven Couture

Making garments that connect us to our lively surrounding using composite garment weaving, tapestry techniques and geometrical pattern making.

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Abstract

In this work, a hand-woven fashion collection is designed. The aim is to create clothes that connect us with life and nature and make us feel that we are part of a vibrant surrounding. Following the idea of clothes as a social mean to connect to one's environment, this work examines several concepts and techniques that already incorporate certain aspects of connectedness and directness. A particular interest lies in how the form of clothes can relate to the way they are made and the tools that are used – with focus on the weaving technique. Historical and cultural sources, as well as contemporary design research are consulted, that show how the form and material of clothing are developed simultaneously instead of separately. Throughout the process of this work, I want to practically explore the following questions: How can the process of making become tangible in the outcome? How can the way of making become a tool for artistic expression? This work aims to find practical answers to these questions in form of woven clothes. Weaving techniques are applied to the design of the garments. Tapestry techniques are used in order to create vertical slits/ openings for body parts. Garment forms are developed by experimenting with rectangular shaping/ block pattern making. The result is a collection of seven unique wearable pieces. They are one-of-a-kind luxury clothes, couture so to speak, made using different materials and woven structures on different types of looms. Last but not least the row of garments represent and show my learning process and adaption to a new way of working, a different way of designing and making clothes.

Key words: Composite Garment Weaving, Weaving, Pattern Making, Tapestry, Making, Clothes, Fashion, Haute Couture, Design, Loom, Textile, Craft, Block Pattern, Geometry, Fully Fashioned, Zero Waste, Slow Fashion, Sustainability, Sensuality

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Introduction

The following text is the theory part of my practical Master's thesis "Wild Things – A Collection of Handwoven Couture". This thesis examines the potential of handweaving for contemporary fashion design. I aim to create "wild" (=valuable and meaningful) clothing that connects the wearer to the environment and vibrant, natural surrounding. In the text I start with a background of my work and position it within the field of fashion design and previous personal work experiences (pages 3 – 10): Here I show the different contents involved in fashion design – the pictorial surface, the form and the material level – and how clothing can be perceived and sensed. The purpose, the goal and the starting questions of the work are formulated, followed by an explanation of the practical approach on pages 13 – 14. How can I visualize the fabrication of clothes and make it tangible in the garment? How can the connection to the surrounding and environment become tangible in handwoven clothes? Pages 15 – 20 describe the work process step by step. Starting with the development of my way of working with paper models and weaving explorations I show how my process becomes more free, more interactive in body and shape and virtuoso in the weaving. Decisions, considerations and reflections are displayed. Through utilizing the properties of the loom and different materials my work results in seven clothes – original in form, material and textile structure. This Master's project was exhibited during May/ June 2021 in the Greenhouse of Trädgårdsföreningen Gothenburg. The exhibition set up is shown and explained in the text. In the last part of this thesis, the work will be discussed and reflected (pages 25– 30), ending with a conclusion of the result on page 31. In this part of the text, the activist and political statement of this work is connected to its aesthetics and formal propositions. The look and touch of the "wild", deriving from an individual way of making and manufactured production, wants to seduce you to reconsider your values: This work makes materiality and time tangible. It shows how the human energy and ability for skillful, careful and attentive making with the hands can lead to rich expressions and valuable pieces of clothing.

Background

I will begin with introducing myself. I was born in Bremen, Germany in 1988. I first completed a bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Trier, Germany. Afterwards I studied Fashion Design at the University of Applied Sciences in Hamburg where I graduated in summer 2017. Until 2019 I collected some work experience during an internship at the Copenhagen based fashion brand Henrik Vibskov, followed by one year working for the design label BLESS in Berlin, where I was managing the production of the clothing collection. Then I decided to leave that job in order to get back to working more creatively. That for I decided to do a postgraduate degree study at the HDK Valand / Steneby. With the following background text I am inviting you to follow some of the thoughts that accompanied this master project and my way of working.

Are we human?

This is the title of a book published in 2017 for the 3rd Design Biennial in Istanbul, written by Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley. Illustrated with numerous images, they show how we humans have always been inventing, forming and defining ourselves, and how design, the things we make, conditions and bears witness to this formation. Flexible and adaptable as we are, we are always questioning ourselves, constantly redefining and reinventing ourselves. (A highly social, communicative and society-building act.)

Unlike animals, which have fur, we mostly need clothes to keep us warm. Like a second skin, clothing becomes a shell and a form that we can choose and shape ourselves – which we constantly do, as shown by Rudofsky (1947). The manner of this form testifies to and conditions our self-image, as well as our relationship to the environment, our surroundings and other living beings. Just as we breed animals with different skins, we domesticate and cultivate ourselves through our clothing or try to remain as “wild” as possible in it (see below). In the following, I present the extent to which the human “shaping of oneself” becomes visible in the field of clothing and fashion design.

Clothing as language, as a testimony of identity

Once upon a time there was a poor journeyman tailor. Since he made his own clothes and was quite good at it, he dressed himself in fancy clothes. One day, when he arrived in a foreign town, he is mistaken for a wealthy count instead of a poor tailor because of his clothes.

He is received and treated as such in the foreign place. So it happens that the mayor's daughter falls in love with him – and he with her. Even when the truth about the tailor's identity is revealed, love endures and gives the once poor tailor a prosperous life.

Above, I rephrased the novella entitled “*Clothes make the man*” that was written in 1874 by the Swiss poet Gottfried Keller. The eponymous proverb “Clothes make the man” means that people identify, classify and judge each other through clothing. It speaks of the fact that our identity and how we look have always been closely linked. In earlier times, laws prescribed dress codes so that social status was unmistakably communicated through appearance. In many places, local costumes in different variations showed and still show the status in a society and communicate clear messages (married or single / profession / social status). For example on the island of Kihnu in Estonia, women still weave and wear striped skirts in shades of red and blue. There, red colours are associated with happiness and youth, while dark shades of blue signify mourning (Finkernagel, 2020). Between the red-striped and blue-striped skirts, there are numerous red-blue striped gradations that can make the individual emotional state of the skirt-wearer visible in a differentiated way (Fig. 1). How many different skirts a woman owns in turn has to do with her wealth (Kihnu Cultural Space Foundation, n.d.). Thus clothing, even without written words, can become a kind of language: It communicates and clarifies about status, belonging, identity or inner state of mind. And similar to oral language, there are different vocabularies and different understandings in the languages of clothing. In the Estonian culture of Kihnu, for example, different colour combinations speak of different types of mourning, while elsewhere, simply black is considered the colour of mourning.

In her book “*Body acts queer – Clothing as a performative challenge to heteronormativity*”, fashion designer and theorist Maja Gunn (2016) shows how rigid concepts of femininity and masculinity can be replaced by a variety of shades in order to create queer expressions. She shows how through our way of dressing and designing, we can break down all too fixed ideas and create a wider range of individual expression. Gunn also illustrates the mutual interactions of individual bodily perception, clothing, and expression: she shows how clothing can interact with our bodies. Clothes are thus not only a mean of communication, but also influence self-perception, how we feel, how we sense our bodies, which posture we adopt, similarly to how language influences thinking. Fashion and clothing seem to (inwardly) constitute and (outwardly) communicate our self-experience, our perception of physicality and identity, attitude, and posture.

Meaningful/ meaningless things

I have the impression that in our western individual culture, the language of fashion has long been conquered by the dressing individual, constantly changing and reinventing itself. Meanings of colours, shapes, patterns, and other characteristics of clothing change through being lived and adapted in other cultures and contexts. An example of this is camouflage-patterned military clothing, which took on an ambivalent meaning when worn by pacifists at anti-war demonstrations in the 1960s and 1970s in America. Meanings can therefore dissolve or change, catalysed by social movements. But is meaning always given?

In her book *"A Wild Thing"*, Hilde Bouchéz (2017) describes the phenomenon of meaningless things, as phenomena of commerce. Soulless, lifeless tamed things, artificially made to shine with spotlights, branding and advertising slogans. Each of these parts is meaningless on its own, but in alternation and in the mass they become a metaphor of mere renewal. I think that we are seeking true meaning, and this is also visible again and again in current fashion: the trend to wear merchandise, i.e. to identify oneself clearly with a certain brand, product, place or service, is evidence of this need. For example, one of the most famous items of clothing by the fashion label Vetements is a copy of the t-shirt worn by DHL postmen and postwomen (DHL is a German international courier, package delivery and express mail service). It seems that we are looking for meaning and for new ideas – we are looking for "Wild things" (like the DHL t-shirt?) that embody this meaning. I'm interested in how meaningful, living design is made, how wild things are created, which is what Hilde Bouchéz's book is about. Referring to Bouchéz, the inner light that shines from "wild" things is reflecting the methodology and intention of the maker. She is elaborating on how this unity between a person, a thing and the universe can be attained through a particular manner of both designing and experiencing objects. She writes that in order to recognise wild things, we would have to learn again to see and feel with more than just the eye.

How meaning can find its way into clothing

A) Form language / visual language

In autumn/winter 2017/18 I worked as an intern at the Danish fashion label Henrik Vibskov. They also design clothes with meaning: every season, they develop new shapes, colours and patterns for a certain theme/content, which will eventually lead to an expression in the form of fashion. On the one hand, the contents and themes are communicated on a figurative and pictorial, associative level, on the other hand, an attempt is made to find a formal language for the contents on a more subtle level. I would like to pick out an example that I worked on there: For the SS19 collection on the theme of “wind”, I designed the shape of a jacket. A special feature was the four-part sleeve, whose sweeping shape was inspired by the wavy facade of a building of the Basel Trade Fair (Fig. 4). The jacket was then made from a fabric on which waves and sailing ships were depicted (Fig. 5).

In this example, there are two different levels on which the content “wind” is communicated: Firstly, through the form (= form language) and secondly, through pictorial associations (= image language). In addition, the meaning was communicated by giving the garment the name “Breathe In bomber jacket” and accompanying the presentation at Paris Fashion Week with a windmill-like installation with performers. Henrik Vibskov thus often communicates very directly and with clear signs. Similar to the way a smiley looks cheerful, he prints and weaves sailing ships and paragliders to communicate wind. At the same time, I must add here, he certainly has a constant language of form that seems to be there regardless of the seasonal themes. The work there has reinforced my interest in a more abstract, subtle, possibly more profound way of communicating via fashion.

B) Appearance and materiality

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard distinguishes between a formal and a material way of imagining things (1999). He examines literary, poetic texts for this purpose. While a formal imagination describes the outer form and surface of things, a material imagination takes into account their more constant or stable features, the content and matter itself. On a formal level, he says, the changing and renewing surface and appearance is playfully formulated out of a spontaneous heart’s desire. This kind of statement, he says, is therefore of no long duration or validity. On the other hand, the description on a material level would grasp the being itself, which continues over all times, in its internal originality (Bachelard, 1999).

Following his reflections, I have to think of the world of fast fashion, which, driven by capitalism, has to rely on a constant superficial renewal. One could also make a reference to Hilde Bouchéz here and postulate an opposition between “wild” things, meaningful in content and eternally alive, and “tame” things, unstable in form, superficial and fleeting.

Bachelard goes on with saying that these two levels of formal and material imagination can be both present in a work at the same time, and even never be completely separated. I agree and want to give an example of such a mix from the design label BLESS, where I worked for one year after being with Henrik Vibskov. In the case of the “Holidayshirts”, it is not only the superficial motif that plays a role, but above all the material: they are t-shirts made of thin, transparent cotton voile, digitally printed with holiday panoramas. Wearing these t-shirts gives the wearer the feeling of being in an airy holiday memory. Instead of the fabric, you seem to be wearing an atmosphere and environment on your body.

If clothing is a language, BLESS invents new words, or perhaps rather combinations of already existing words, such as here “airy gauzy cotton voile” meets “holiday panorama” in the form of “t-shirt”. In this way, they look for formulations for contents they have invented themselves. They make clothes that are supposed to serve a certain new purpose out of personal needs (Bless, 2006). Here it becomes clear how superficial appearance and material can communicate something simultaneously. In my bachelor’s thesis in fashion design, I tried to give form to different moods on Sundays. The result is a collection of 13 Sunday clothes that embody some of the emotional states of this day of the week. Here I worked on the narrative - pictorial level, the formal level and the material level. For example, I created a dress that imitates the shape of a deck chair and is sewn from a checkered acrylic tablecloth from the 60s (Fig. 8). Another example is a jumper knitted from heavy silk in yellow and red, whose intarsia knitted pattern lines up the calendar numbers of a tear-off calendar and was developed in its form from a priestly gown (Fig. 9). Here too, on the one hand, already existing, understandable formal signs, such as a fine tablecloth or calendar numbers, are visible. In addition, these garments communicate through forms, to find a formal language of Sunday. This happens via working with the shapes of deck chairs, priestly robes, swimming noodles on the body, pyjamas hanging on hooks and borrowed cashmere jumpers. What do forms created in this way say? Between elegant drape and slouch, sublime being worn and dissolving into it, physical activity and a leaning back, lying down, perhaps they express a/my sense of Sunday.

How the how and the what are interdependent: textile fabrication and form

What particularly interested me in my bachelor's thesis was the extent to which the outer form of clothing can be thought and fabricated together with the material and textile techniques. The example from my work that illustrates this best is the "black hole" (Fig. 10 & Fig. 11). It contains the feelings of "not knowing where to go with oneself", dissolving, being swallowed up and not wanting to get out of the tough Sunday mood, without the stability of the well-rehearsed everyday life. In terms of shape, it is a hemisphere with seven cylindrical exits and is made of dark purple mohair yarn. The shape, the colour and the fluffy soft, at the same time airy puffy material speak to us. At the same time, the textile technique is an important element: the shape was hand-knitted, almost in one go. The stitch structure or the areas where the shape is created are made invisible by the many hairs of the mohair yarn. The result is a seemingly morphed surface. In this example, material, colour, textile technique and form are forfeited in their design, coordinated with each other, and thus together contribute to a dense expression (= poem?). Similar to an object we find in nature, like a tree or a stone, the form and surface "grows" out of the material. I make the following hypothesis:

A certain language of form is inherent in the way something is made. This in turn points back to the manufacturing process. This connection can be more or less pronounced or recognisable.

Less pronounced: does flour ground by the wind in a windmill look different and – when we see the flour, do we also feel the wind? More distinctly, an example from the Bronze Age shows how the shape of an animal skin, without being cut, is sewn together in a certain way to form a top. Later, as illustrated by Hamre & Meedom (1985), based on a similar shape, a textile version of the blouse was woven accordingly (Fig. 12 & 13). With the windmill, like the Bronze Age blouse, I am fascinated by the directness of the connection between how and what. Can we still feel this connection when experiencing the outcome? With this comes the second hypothesis:

A direct, tangible relationship between the how and the what makes it easier for us to connect and relate to our surroundings. Matter, time, cause and effect can be grasped and that makes us realize how we are part of everything, how everything is part of us.

These two statements form the start of my master project in which I want to apply them through weaving clothes directly on the loom.

The formal language of weaving

During my undergraduate studies I wove three different garments. The first piece was a coat that was woven in shape. Without paying much attention to the properties of weaving, I made a paper pattern which I then wove into shape. At the edges, the unneeded areas of the warp threads then remained and became fringes. Here there is no connection between shape and textile technique (Fig. 13). The second piece was a poncho, where I left a part in the middle unwoven so that the head could be put through it – a simple woven rectangle. Since the most logical shape to weave on a loom is a rectangle, this example shows how to design the garment's shape while taking into account the loom properties (Fig. 14). The third garment was a pair of trousers, where I wove the trouser legs as two rectangles on the loom. To complete the trouser legs I added a hip piece from bought fabric to the woven legs. In this garment you can see the attempt to follow the shape of the weaving and still create a more complex shaped form (Fig. 15). I would like to build on this work and develop a formal language based on the process of weaving in my master's thesis. Taking the inspiring example of the Bronze Age blouse as a starting point, I would like to attempt to weave more complex shaped garments using interwoven slits. I am driven and motivated by an inkling of interesting and exciting forms that could emerge through this "collaboration" with the loom.

At this point I would like to position my method within the field of composite garment weaving. This term is currently used for the technique of weaving garments directly on the loom. There are several ways in which this can be done, most of which are still being studied and researched at university institutions. Anna Piper at the University of Nottingham works mainly with block patterns and is interested in how handweaving can cooperate with technological inventiveness (Piper & Townsend, 2015). Holly McQuillan, a zero-waste specialist who has just completed her PhD at the Swedish School of Textiles in Borås, weaves free-form pattern pieces joined in several layers with a Jacquard loom (McQuillan, 2019). My own project differs from these two examples in context, aim and approach to work. My work is not in the realm of research, does not seek to advance tools or weaving techniques, but places the focus on the actual outcome, the design and shaping of garments. While Holly McQuillan allows all kinds of shapes to be freely woven, I choose to follow a certain interest in flat / rectangular shaped patterns. Unlike them, I am also not trying to find new ways to design garments that can later be automatically mass produced, but I want to activate and use my sensual skills by working with my hands.

What I want to express

Let's come back to the "meaning" discussed at the beginning. In the examples mentioned, different moods, queerness, the feeling of wind, holiday memories, Sunday feelings were translated into clothing. Unlike in my bachelor's thesis, there is no content-determining thought at the beginning of the master's thesis, but a certain way of working: I try to weave clothes directly on the loom, and to design the shape of the clothes accordingly. What can such a way of making stand for? What meaning can it have? In the following I would like to list different aspects of meaning that I assume to be in it:

A) Simplicity / Immediacy / Directness

Instead of developing a shape that is then cut out of a fabric and sewn together, I combine these otherwise independent production steps into one: I weave the fabric and the pattern of the garment at the same time. Afterwards, only a few seams are necessary. There is no waste, as a woven piece is sewn together in its entirety to form one garment. All the steps build on each other and are interconnected, rather than independent or isolated. Everything takes place in one place. Simplicity or clarity is also seen and felt in the consistent work with basic rectangular shapes.

B) "Bodily" dresses, shaped independently

In made-to-measure tailoring, the human body forms the initial shape and the indicator for the pattern development / shaping. Also in the technique of draping, the fabric on the body is formed into the garment and thus the body forms an essential basic framework for the garment. In my work, apart from the human body, I have another physical body, the loom, to which the garment is supposed to "fit". This makes it possible to create garments that fit our basic human structure, i.e. arms, head, torso, legs, but still have something of their own in their form, because they follow principles of weaving. The clothes themselves become physical in themselves. The clothes are not limited to a certain cultural area or a current fashion: The formal language of weaving follows a universal aesthetic that is not conditioned by time. It can be understood across cultures, because weaving is known and rooted everywhere on earth as the oldest textile cultural technique.

C) Making production visible / raising awareness

I show that there is no universal convention on how to make clothes. I develop my individual approach that follows its own rules. In doing so, I draw attention to the usual production and manufacturing of clothes – which remains abstract and invisible to most customers of our western culture due to industrialisation and outsourcing from tailoring to low-wage countries. Alternatively, I hope for curious participation in my process – and would like to invite others to follow it. Last but not least, the hand-woven fabric presents a high-resolution or enlarged image of a fabric. The fabric of otherwise common clothing is usually about three times finer. That makes it directly and almost spatially visible how the fabric was created.

D) The material speaks

Since I make the fabric especially for certain garments, I have the opportunity to work very attentively with different materials and combinations of materials. Through hand weaving, the special tactile qualities of different materials are made perceptible. So I sharpen and use my sense of touch – as does the later wearer of the clothes. The fabric is, in my experience, an essential ingredient, even the central basis for the meaning, the expression of clothing.

E) Time and value of clothing

Since it takes a relatively large amount of work and time to produce such clothing, it will be correspondingly very expensive. Thus, a shift in value takes place: I show how the value of clothing can be weighted, as an alternative to today's usual assessment (see above). This value is not based here on particularly exclusive or expensive materials, but on the special form development, the careful handwork and the time-intensive realisation. As the textile artist and designer Anni Albers writes in her book *"On Weaving"* (1965), it is the "thoughtfulness and care and sensitivity in regard to form that makes a house turn into art" (p. 54). The appreciation of these qualities, it seems, has been somewhat unlearned in western societies, while in cultures where capitalism is not so deeply rooted, valuable clothes are made by hand in just such a way. The Widad Kamel Kawar collection, for example, shows how clothing and textile handicrafts create identity. The collection shows a diverse range of handmade Palestinian clothing and thus portrays the fates and lifestyles of the makers (Kawar, 2011). Following my own rules, I want to make valuable, unique clothes with my hands, which already tell something about life and relation to matter through the texture of the fabric.

Whether and how these possible statements or levels of meaning will take shape in connection with my weaving approach remains to be seen. In my practical work I want to find out and explore, and thus learn a new and own “language of clothes”.

Purpose

My purpose is to create “wild” (= valuable and meaningful) clothing that connects the wearer to the environment and vibrant surroundings.

Goal/ Objective

The goal is to make clothes in cooperation with the weaving technique.

Questions Formulation

How can I create “wild” and meaningful clothes by weaving them on the loom?

How can I visualize the fabrication of clothes and make it tangible in the garment when seeing or wearing it?

How can the connection to the surrounding and environment become tangible in clothes?

Approach

I want to find and elaborate a technique to create garments that connect us to our lively surrounding. Whole garment making as seen in the Bronze Age blouse and a tangible fabrication in garments are important facets of this connection. They inspire me to “grow the garments with my hands”, to create clothes from raw materials, yarn, threads. Instead of knitting or other needlework I choose to weave the clothes on a loom. This way of working is less free since this big and highly elaborated tool comes along with some rules how it can be used. Working with a loom is like having a stubborn partner in my process. A partner/ tool that I find very interesting to discover and that limits me in my possibilities and thereby challenges my skills. The rules that I make up, following the logic of the loom and the weaving, provide me with a framework for my creative play. This framework with the rules will be redefined and discussed along the way of making in order to find out what is important for my work.

As I am developing a handwoven fashion collection, I am working in parallel on the development of fabrics and the pattern design of the shapes. On the one hand I am weaving samples and experimenting with different materials and bindings. For each individual garment I design an own fabric. Different materials and bindings will be tried out in order to match shape and surface of the clothes. On the other side I am making up and elaborating patterns and shapes of the garments. When working on the shapes of the clothes I am using one rectangular flat as a base for the whole garment. I experiment with paper models and fabric toiles for the form finding. A big part of both of the works, weaving and pattern making for me is the experiment. I use it to try out different things and to surprise myself. It inspires me and generates ideas. Afterwards I work on these ideas more consciously, and intentionally elaborate things and apply different changes. Weaves and Shapes are inspiring each other in the making. A starting point to further develop a certain garment can either be a fabric I make or a shape. When the right combination of fabric and shape is found, further development like shrinkage calculations, solutions for closures or other has to be done before the weaving of the garment can begin. I always try the toiles and final pieces on my own body to experience how a garment feels and looks. Throughout the process of the project I want to learn and get to know a new design approach and aesthetical language. Hence I work step by step, always looking at a finished piece and documenting it, before I move on. Due to weaving can inherit a lot of planning, calculating and thinking in advance I try to not get lost in it but to continue parallel with physical and intuitive work.

Result of Process

Whithin the master's project, I was alternating between two different working modes: On the one hand I spend time on general weaving practice and form explorations. Here I was interested in working with materiality, trying out different bindings and material combinations. As well I opened up my mind exploring the possibilities of how to shape garments from a flat rectangle using vertical slits and as least cuts as possible. Thinking back to my goal of learning a language this part could be described as the "word finding" or research phase. Then, secondly, I was working on the realization of the woven garments. That included refining the shape of the garments as well as weaving some larger samples and measuring the shrinkage when bathing it in water after weaving. Then I was weaving the garment. To take the woven cloth from the loom and feel its quality was always a very exiting moment, as well as assembling the garment and trying it on. Just then I could start to experience and tell, what I was actually "saying" with it.

Spring 2020: Explorations – finding my way weave garments

I started with form experiments using checked paper that I would fold up to garment shapes in the scale of 1:10. The idea was to use one rectangle (that I later could weave as one peace) and by cutting in slits and folding and taping it together here and there creating small patterns for garments. Within these limitations I wanted to find out different ways to make all kinds of shapes. To work with such limitations felt like having a set frame, some defined rules that make up a game in which I could play and puzzle around.

I realized that I like to be very attentive and careful with the sheets of paper, not to create any unnecessary folds and not to fold it in a way that it doesnt want to go, not forcing or crushing it into some kind of shape but rather handling it like a raw egg (-shell). Afterwards I sew and tried on some of the shapes in fabric toiles (Fig. 18 – 22). For the start, I was not interested in developing very funny or unusually shaped clothes. Instead, I was keen on finding out how the loom / the concept of using one whole piece of cloth with some slits and least cutting / sewing turns out to be visible if I try to shape typical garments, like pants, a dress, a coat, a jacket. As it can be seen in the images, I was trying different variations of my models, to understand how the proportions relate to each other. The upper part of the pants for example, was always as long as the legs of the pants. As for the dress, the sleeve-length corresponded with the width of the body. I tried to find solutions and play

with those relations and proportions. As for the top mostly the body was too wide or the sleeves were too short. I came up with the idea of a Jacket or coat, where the some of the body-width could be turned into an overlapping closure in the front. Fig. 23 shows a coat that contains this idea.

At the same time I started to weave. I tried out different ideas I had when thinking about handwoven garments and technical solutions with the weaving instead of sewing method: I was weaving pockets, buttonholes, double layers to include a second “lining” fabric, weaving a quilt-like fabric and other.

I planned to weave the coat as seen in Fig. 23 out of a weave comparable to the dark blue weave from Fig. 18. While preparing to dress the loom, we were not longer able to use the workshops due to COVID19, hence I adapted my plans: Instead of a 16 shaft counterbalance loom that was 1,50 meter wide I not had a simple four shaft loom with one meter width. So I decided to weave a jacket instead.

1. Jacket (see Fig. 29 & 30)

- Woven on a 4 shaft counterbalance loom
- Threading: 9 threads / cm
- Warp: Linen 6/1 in green, white, blue and grey
- Weft: Grey hairy mohair and blue wool (Tuna / Borgs vävgarner)
- Visualizing pattern construction and weaving procedure with color blocks/ blocks of different materials

It was an exiting moment to see the flat woven piece next to the assembled garment. After weaving it and knowing what part will become what, the flat piece of fabric already contains the notions of an envelope, a case, the wrapping and folding that will put it around a body. When wearing it, it feels like wearing jacket and at the same time like wearing a fabric. I find it interesting how there are some propositions of the fabric that shift my preconceptions of a “jacket”. The fabric is somewhere in between a woollen blanket and a denim fabric. I thought it was beautiful, how the threads stick out of the sleeves, that makes the artisanal fabrication visible and very present. But it also creates strong hippie associaton and 70ies vibes that I would not like to have as “loud”.

Autumn 2020: Application – designing a clothing collection

After finishing the jacket I got a helpful feedback from Alexander Grüner-Moström, a textile artist and weaver who was teaching at the HDK in spring term 2020. He wrote me in an email:

“It is about HOW you use your hands, your heart, your eyes and brain, your knowledge and your experience, that is important - not just the fact that something is being handmade by your hands. Learn how to control and steer the loom by your intentions, by your heart; and be playful with it; to get to the place you want to go. Instead of letting the loom control you.”

Hence I continued my work by experimenting more with the weaving. This time it was not about possible technical solutions in garment weaving but about intuitive work, trying to follow my attractions and curiosity of materials, colors and bindings. It was not so much about the outcome but rather the process of experimenting (Fig. 31). Next to the weaving, I continued playing with paper models and shapes. I developed a collection of seven different garments (Fig. 32). Also with the shapes I started to work more freely. More making and feeling, less thinking or planning was to be done. I photoshopped the weavings on the toiles to play around a bit and imagine how different combinations could feel or look (Fig. 33). The whole process of how a thread finally turns into a garment is so long and complex, involves many decisions, and steps. Using all kinds of tools to imagine how everything comes together helps me grasping it and playing around a bit faster. Even though the photoshopped image has nothing to do with the true materiality and fall of the individual fabric it trains my imagination and sense.

I decided to weave three garments of this collection, all on the same warp. I decided to do so because I found it very interesting to try out different qualities and material combinations when I was weaving my try out warps, which often resulted in diversely striped pieces. I wanted to include this aspect in the weaving of a row of different garments: A blouse, a pullover and a pair of pants.

2. Blouse (Fig. 34 – 36)

- Woven on an 8 shaft countermarch loom
- Warp: orange = cotton 16:2 , white = ramie - viscose paper yarn 36:1, 12 threads per cm, weft: same as warp.
- Cuffs and collar in alternating weft materials.

The blouse still consists of one rectangle but is more free in the use of cuts and seams compared to the jacket. I excerpt a part of the back (the collar) and close it with a seam to have a collar and reduce the width in the back. Instead of underarm flaps (like done in the jacket) I use this flap part of the pattern as cuffs to lengthen the sleeves. This is a rather fine fabric, compared to the jacket to make the handweaving more subtle. I was comparing it to a sewn garment from industrially fabricated fabric in order to find out whether it is important to handweave it. And I found out that it is important for me, that I am certainly interested in the expression of the handwoven. I developed a bubbly surface within the weave, to give the material more space. When weatened, the material relaxes and works its way, chooses its position and thereby creates a lively surface. I chose a repetitive, timeless and simple pattern in order to not distract and in order to put attention on the tactile and the shape. I feel that it is plant based, the fabric feels slightly crunchy, the light is shining through, air is floating through very easily and it is very light and fragile. When sewing it, I feel like a surgeon, operating a skin (Fig. 37).

3. Pullover / Anorak (Fig 38 – 40)

- Same loom and warp as for the shirt.
- Weft of “Lining” part = different colored cashmere.
- Weft of the body part: mohair bouclé in brown and salmon that was brushed with a metal brush after weaving.

The fur-like fabric hides or abstracts the fact that its woven. But it doesn't loose by that, it gains I find: The (due to the brushing) highly processed fabric creates a certain debth and makes this piece very interesting and elaborated. It reminds me of the thematics of the bronze age blouse that referred to animal skin shapes. The hairiness makes it wild. The fabric is very voluminous, creates even more a body of its own. When assembling, I still feel like a surgeon, maybe a bit better trained surgeon

then with the shirt. I have to think of orangutans – and I might feel like one when wearing it. The thick hairy surface is very much alive. Like wet hair that just dried it acts freely and has a lot of own movement in it. There is some kind of lively interaction with light on the surface, as if painted with strokes of oilpaint. The backside with the orange and white stripes shines a bit through and enhances the range of light and shade in color. The design of this piece is a result of easily following materials and making structures that attracted me. A lot of stomach drivenness is in it, which feels good and leads to an appealing outcome for me.

4. Pants (Fig. 41 – 45)

- Same loom and warp as for the shirt.
- Weft: a dark blue woolmix that consists of 75% merino wool and 25 % angora.

I was weaving the pants as a third piece on the same warp as the blouse and the pullover. From the beginning on I was not so satisfied with the material and the weaving that I chose to make it in. Still I wanted to use what I had left in the warp and also try out the pants pattern. It was also interesting to just make a garment without this urgent need and longing for wanting to see it. There was this possibility of being surprised from it afterwards. It feels good that I made it. But there was no big surprise and it is not very appealing in my opinion. Still, I learned some things from it: I don't like so much the look of the woven pockets, it reminds me of patched pockets in another fabric, maybe they also don't have the right proportions or size. The pattern works and fits but does not feel 100% right when moving in it. It feels a bit too tight or not relaxed/ free enough. I want to give the body more space and try to open the crotch and leave some slits as I did in the pullover when doing the next pants. I think it is a very good draft / prototype of a pants that I can use as a reference to make more pants.

In order to try and see how the four so far woven garments look together, I took some pictures of different combinations and ways of wearing them (Fig. 46 & 47). I was curious to detect some kind of general expression that they would give and to understand (if) what they have in common. I found that more important than seeing the clothes was to feel the clothes and wear the clothes on my body. To feel the different materials on my skin, the different weights and qualities of each piece, layered and next to each other, made me realize the strangeness of these objects that we call clothes. In everyday life we seem to melt with them and become one. Wearing

the handcrafted garments felt different – and I guess that is because of the slightly more tangible way of construction, the higher resolution of it. It put my attention to the clothes and, like it was already in the sewing (earlier I was talking of feeling like a surfer), it made me handle them with a lot of care. Wearing the clothes felt like handling a strange, not yet known thing. Hard to tell in which way that experience was influenced because I myself had woven them with my body, now wearing them on my body. For that I would need another person's experience of wearing them, that I will hopefully soon try out. But I think it is not only the bodily knowledge of the making process that creates the feeling I got from it.

Winter / Spring 2021: Play – weaving garments that interact with the body

To continue with the weaving of clothes I was taking in some learnings from the so far woven garments:

I) The pattern and shaping that I liked the most, was the one of the jacket and the pullover. I would like to go on working with slits and openings. With the pattern of the pullover I like how the sleeves are twisted in. I want to continue to work bodily like this with the fabric.

II) I got some feedback from a pattern maker, Blandine Manouri, that motivated me to try to get away from the paper models and drape a bit with fabric on the body. I was very much fascinated by the shade and light in the fur like pullover. The flat piece reminded me of a painting in oil, with three-dimensional strokes of the brushes.

III) I like a lot to see the flat woven piece next to the assembled garment. I think it is very interesting to understand the gap that is between them, the left question mark of how one turns into the other. I would like to explore this fascination and fill the gap in a way that this interesting point, the relation of the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional becomes visible and tangible only in the garment itself.

IV) The last point leads me to the idea to make weaving-patterns that are as big as the woven piece of clothing. So instead of having a small repetition like in the blouse I was interested in having a bigger progression visible as sketched in Fig. 48.

With these things in mind I started to weave again. I created different gradients in lightness / darkness and also in different colours (Fig. 49 – 51). All of a sudden the weaving starts to feel like painting. I liked how the lake in front of my window is reflected in the first weavings of phase number three. Also the colors that I used could be found within the view out of my workshop window – another way of connecting to my surroundings. I find that the weavings even capture a feeling of progression and time in their almost moving surface.

During that time I showed my work to a good friend and asked him, what he was thinking that I was doing and working on. He referred to the German philosopher Kant and his notion, that we understand reality through the relations of time and space (Kant, 1787). In a way, my friend said, I would trace and even recreate this process of understanding life and reality in its dimensions of time and space: Time can be experienced through the progressively changing pattern in the weaving and the color gradient whereas the dimensions of space are worked with through the whole weaving process starting with the warp, putting in the weft, creating a flat, that is then assembled to a form. He definitely touched on something true. I had always experienced weaving as a very exciting process of creation. I feel almost magical because of the genius tool that enables to create a flat textile in somewhat efficient way. After those tests I still had time to weave another sample where I wanted to try out to create a color gradient. So less difference in terms of lightness / darkness but a transition through different colors (See Fig. 52 and 53).

For the shapes I tried out some drapings on friends. I prefer to have moving bodies to drape and try things on. Since I always weave those long try out pieces on the 40 cm wide sample loom, I had the idea of using such width to make a wrap - garment (Fig. 54). In addition I wanted to try to change the pants a bit and try to make a next version of the one that I had made. So I made shorts that have an open crotch and just slits for pockets, and a lining that is woven onto them that is tucked inside and thereby creates a backup fabric for the pockets and at the same time fills the gaps of the open crotches (Fig. 55 & 56). To make an outfit I paired the pants and pullover with a very simple top (Fig. 55). First I wanted to make a short sleeved shirt based on the pattern of the shirt that I had made before, but then it felt wrong to have it too complicated or constructed - I wanted to simplify it and give the fabric more space to move how it wants.

With that, three new shapes, a top, shorts and a wrap pullover were ready. Having these in mind I had worked simultaneously on the textiles that they should be woven in. While I was weaving, I looked outside the window from time to time. My view from the weaving workshop points directly into the fir tree forest with a piece of grass and moss in front of it. Again I felt like I am weaving in the shades of my outside surroundings. As if I was a chameleon that wants to become invisible through merging with the colors around me. I was, a bit sceptically, guessing that it will turn out to be some kind of robin hood outfit or forester garment. At the same time I was really attracted by the different dark green shades of the fir trees, especially if I looked at them from a distance.

5. Wrap-pullover (Fig. 57 & 58)

- Warp: Cotton 16/2 in either blue or green alternating 1/1 with 6/1 white linnen
- Weft: Six different Materials, alternating irregularly, floating on one side: Mohair bouclé in foxbrown, dark grey Alpaca, treegreen Goat & Sheep carpet yarn, grassgreen wool, neon yellow alpaca, camel mohair. Between every of those there is two wefts in a thin grey wool (type Farø) in canvas binding. A thinner dark grey alpaca in the lining parts.

The textile of the “wrap pullover” I associate with different sorts of moss, mushrooms, grass growing on the ground. I liked the combination of so many different animal fibres in the textile. I became even more aware of that mixture when I was bathing the fabric and the room smelled as if the alpacas, sheep and goats had lived in there for a while.

6. Shorts and 7. Top (Fig. 59 – 61)

- Warp: Cotton 16/2 in either blue or green alternating 1/1 with 6/1 white linnen
- Weft of the shorts: Shetland wool in different greentones woven in a twill, cashmere-ramie mix for the lining parts in a sort of huckaback binding.
- Weft of the top: Cotton 16/2 in white-yellow and dark blue-green alternating in stripes, woven in canvas.

The textile of the shorts (Fig. 61) reminds me of the shades of green in the fir tree forest. Also because of the twill that changes direction – it is a bit like the needles and the zig zag shapes of the fir trees. In the fabric of the top (Fig. 60) I see stripes of shadows falling on the ground, on a lawn or a street. The time I am spending while weaving these pieces gives me the chance to become aware of those pictoral references and relations.

After I finished the weaving and sewing of these three new pieces I tried out different ways to present them. The presentation format for the examination would be

via zoom on the computer. I decided to show them on the moving body in order to create an experience of the real garment when seeing it on the screen. I am training Quan Dao - Kung Fu since two years. During two weeks that I was weaving every-day on the last three pieces, the kung fu training on thursday evenings felt like a sounding board of the weaving movements memory for my body. Especially the 12 basic exercises of strength, a segment of the training, reminded me of the movements when weaving. A rhythmic and bodily relation between the weaving, the kung fu movements and the shape of the garments became tangible when I firstly tried out to somehow move in the clothes. I tried to transport this relationship in a short movie in which I perform parallel on the loom and in the clothes (Fig. 62).

While working on the film, I became aware that the moving body wearing the clothes I made already carries and represents a relationship to the environment. Its qualities are incorporated in the garments that I was weaving. I want to try to describe the qualities of this relationship of the human body and the surrounding as experienced in the garments and the movement: The clothes are wide enough to offer a space for interaction - a body is in a body. Friction is created through movement. The fabric makes noise. Movement stands out in the form of folds. The shape of the clothes is virtually made for the movement in it - sleeves and legs are connected to the torso using slits in the pattern. This makes them free and moveable, similar to a joint. Movement and activity are hence motivated by the clothing. My personal attitude of pro-activity becomes clear. In my opinion, enjoying and mobilising physical strength is important for an active, responsible and moving society (or at least for me as part of it). Through the full use of my body in weaving the clothes, this attitude is also lived in my way of working. The strong relationship between my values and the way how I do things becomes clear.

The materials, colours and structures of the fabric are inspired by my environment. In the fabrics, I recreate colours and haptics of plants, animals and other things that I discover. This happens almost subconsciously. For example, the exploration of the fluffy stinginess of a fir tree flows into a fabric as if by itself. It is my interest that drives that flow. I noticed for example, that the time spend working in the Swedish forest promotes this process. I feel a deep-seated longing for wild growth and space for nature and human loss of control. It does not need to be a plant or an animal itself that moves me: Working on the last three pieces made me aware that it is also the daylight and shade or the wind on it, that I experience. I desire to give this joy in pristine places a form and a look. I am formulating it in the clothes that I make to become part of it myself. So that I feel "wild".

Exhibition

The HDK Steneby graduates exhibition (21.05. – 06.06.2021) was located in the greenhouse of trädgårdsföreningen in the city center of Gothenburg. This location was a perfect match to my theme of the “Wild” and my work with frames / looms and challenges of limitations. The idea for the exhibition derived from displaying the garments on a loom. The loom in that case was taken apart and is only represented by light wooden sticks that are floating in the space. Each garment is hung on one of the wooden sticks with metal hooks that I took from a contramarsch loom. The sticks are positioned in 90° degree angles on different heights in the room. They allow people to walk in between and underneath so they can look at the pieces from all sides. I was lucky to find a big plant that I involved in the installation to have another wilderness/ nature relation. Besides the clothes there is a projection on a paper in the installation that shows three different short movies: 1. Me moving in the garments and weaving, 2. Animations how the flat woven pieces turn into the garments, 3. Me in the fur pullover on a tree in my garden.

People can explore the clothes, they can look at the movies to have additional information/ content and as a third thing, they can become active themselves: There is a wooden ladder in the set up that is hung with ropes from the metal construction of the ceiling where people can climb up and swing around. On the top there is a bouquet of bananas that can be reached. Even if people barely do that – it can be an invitation and motivation also only for the mind. Because I want to create a movement. Apropos movement: There is a constant wind blowing through the space that makes everything swinging from time to time. Together with the breathing and weaving sounds of my videos the exhibition seems to be living.

Exhibition text:

“Making fashion within our times, on this damaged planet, makes me feel like a wild animal in a cage. In my work I am climbing the fences of this cage, just like an orangutan in the zoo. How to get out? What to do? In this work, the cage becomes a loom and I turn it into my tree in the wilderness by climbing on it and playing in it. Working with the properties of the loom, each garment is handwoven in one continuous piece. Afterwards it is carefully sewn together to a three-dimensional body, ready to be worn. This handwoven fashion collection offers a new way of sensing materiality and our surroundings. Feel free to touch, to smell, to open the cage yourself, to step into wilderness.”

Discussion and Reflection

Development of the collection (learning a language)

I started this work with the intention to learn how to weave garments directly on the loom. Looking back at the development of my work I can see the different steps and learnings that I took during the project. I will start discussing the shapes. The seven pieces of the collection are all based on a rectangle. The first two pieces, the jacket and the blouse were initially inspired by the pattern of the bronze age blouse. The five other pieces were then developed more freely: The fur pullover and the shorts (as the 2.0 version of the pants) sprung from my own imagination. So did the wrap pullover and the top – though these two origin formwise in universal shapes that can be found all over the world. A long stripe of fabric to wrap around the body – that reminds for example of the sari in India, whereas the rectangle with a slit for the neck and closed sides is as well the base for a Guatemalan blouse. This way of shaping the flat woven piece is somehow simple and impulsive. I “just” twist the fabric around the body. At the same time this action is done with a lot of care and attention. The garments are cases, shapes, envelopes for us, made in a manner that provides space for movements.

Still I can see a change in my way of working with shapes. Especially when I look back on my bachelor project, the “sunday collection”. There the shapes were mostly rather passively hanging on the body (the knitted pieces) or actively suggesting a certain static posture, like the deck chair dress. In my master project I found a new way of working with the garments shapes: This time they propose an interactive relation with moving body.

In the textiles I can see how I got into the weaving during the process. Starting with showing the construction method in color blocks in the jacket, I ended up trying to capture the colors and structures of my surroundings with its movements in light and shade. In between I tried different levels of abstraction. With the checked blouse I tried to find out, how subtle I can be in colors and the visible pattern in order to put the focus on the handweaving: In this garment, the handweaving becomes expressive through materials, touch and the bubbly structure of the weave. The fur pullover is another example how I can work in the textile: It is very expressive in the colour and view as well as in touch and structure. At the same time the fact that it is handwoven becomes almost invisible due to the brushing of the fabric opening up the fibres after it was woven. Throughout the work I was interested in

the different ways and the possible diversity of expressions that come along with the ultimate freedom of crafting the textile. Whereas in the beginning (with the jacket) I felt a bit lost within this freedom, I learned that in the end it is just about making and weaving and trying a lot: With following my ideas, intuition and interest in material and color combinations, one weaving test leads to the other. It actually feels like learning a language, and in the end I became more secure in expressing and faster in making the right fabric.

Each of the garments of the collection is an individual piece with its very own shape and fabric – still altogether they form a harmonic collection and have something in common. I want to explain a bit more how I took decisions during the process and what lead to the result of the seven pieces.

Intention: Challenging a system

At the beginning of this text, I stated that we have the capacity of reinventing ourselves. I noted that we are constantly asking and trying to answer the question of how we as humans want to be through the things we make. I too want to take responsibility for our planet and life on earth. I have the will to cause change in our society. But I believe that in the end it won't be for functional, theoretical or scientific reasons that people are motivated to change their lifes. Rather then the drive to avoid for example a raise of the global temperature by stopping certain habits such as driving a car or eating meat it will be an attractive vision of a better life that will cause change. And to develop this vision is what fashion is doing, in my point of view – be it in furniture, architecture or clothing or even art – fashion can propose another way of living and give us new perspectives. That is why I think the easiest way of communicating an idea and motivating people to reconsider some of their values is through an attractive physical object itself. But what is attractive or beautiful? I think the understanding of beauty is itself something that we constantly redefine. It is connected to this search for change and a social process. Hence I feel that my job is to try to formulate and create this beauty. It represents my answer of how I want to live and how I want to be as a human.

This motivation opens my mind and view, makes me become aware of my longings and act consciously. But how does this instruct my way of working? There are already some ideas on how to make clothing production more sustainable. So far, I have not mentioned the ways of working with zero waste or minimal seam pattern making. That is because these concepts don't motivate or instruct me to do a good

design. It is about something else than keywords and concepts: It is about real interests and meanings, about subjective curiosity in other ways of doing and making. If this drive is not given, techniques like Zero Waste pattern cutting will lead to rubbish being worn on the body instead of ending up in the bin and that the garments will then be thrown away quite soon. Alas, the way I do things itself is aligned to those longings and ideas for another way of living.

The dutch artist Joep van Lieshout also works a lot with utopias / distopias and creates housings, furniture and art around his futuristic ideas. One of his visions seems most interesting and funny to me: It is his Gesamtkunstwerk of the “New Tribal Labyrinth“. In that he proposes a future where production and a re-establishment of our relationship with materials takes centre stage in society (Atelier van Lieshout). One of his artworks of this series is a sculpture representing a loom (Fig. 64).



Fig. 75, “Loom” by Joep van Lieshout (2016)

I was very happy to get to know this body of work. Van Lieshout asks how pre-industrial ways of working could be part of our future. I think this has to be looked at in a differentiated way, because it should not be about falsely romanticising the past - life was very hard and tedious back then. There is a reason for industrialisation and our lives are arguably easier and freer nowadays. Still, there are things we miss. Lieshout (2015) states that life in the rich western society often happens on the sur

face, becomes more of a lifestyle. We are technocrats, bureaucrats, designers. We design and use things that are made on the other side of the world, where labour is cheapest. I ask: what is the goal in this? A life on the surface? For me the joy of life is something sensual and a whole life experience. An interesting example of a social development in this direction is the food culture of the last 70 years. In the 60s, the best food was ready-made meals in plastic from the supermarket. That was the future: the luxury of saving time and making life easier. But what to do with all that time? Dumbing down, floundering around and being filled with images from screens? Work more and worry about the economy? We are mostly well fed and have enough of everything. In food culture today we see what this luxurious situation can do to us: Some people are cooking for themselves again, experimenting with tastes, smells and ingredients. The freedom to discover and interact with the world is often a privilege of childhood in our society, but I believe it is a basic human need that never ends. It is, as in my work, about exploring qualities, materials, sensuality, regardless of direct use or need. These explorations itself feel necessary and important, life without this kind of luxury seems to be meaningless and empty.

This work contributes to a change of the existing system in a way that it shows how valuable careful and curious interaction with materials and skillful making can be. The weaving of the fabric, the way how I make the patterns, these “complications” or “limitations” are all stumbling blocks that motivate me to work in a deeper and more integrative way. A lot of tiny decisions are taken during this process and at the same time they are all interconnected in creating a whole expression altogether. They make me lose control at some point and make me work very intuitively. That can result in a certain wildness and originality in quality in the finished piece. With that I hope to challenge and fight the meaningless and “tame” clothes that are flooding the market as well as the hypes of fashion with its short life cycles.

Further thoughts on the term “wild”

I was using the term “wild” in this thesis by referring to the concept of the “wild things” brought up by Hilde Bouchéz. Her book *“A wild thing”* is an assembly of different essays on the topic. In those she herself seeks to define what she actually means with it. I picked up on it because it relates to what I am seeking in my work. She is talking about the vitality or life force that things can contain. She curated an exhibition of the interior designs of Maarten van Seeveren under the same title. The energy in his work, Bouchéz explains, derives from archetypical forms, drawn almost childlike and the intensity with which he was making the things (Design Museum Gent, 2018).

I can find these two properties in my work, too. Another word for “wild” could be “original”. Because it is about the origin and something archetypical, fundamental or universal, in combination with newness, individuality and life blown into it in the making of it. The term is also strongly related to the idea of nature and wildlife. In this project, I make room for my own nature: I am freeing myself from how clothes are usually made and following my own understanding and interest.

Result: How does it look? (what does it say?)

Throughout this text, I compared my studies with the process of “learning a language”. Now I don’t necessarily have to translate the physical results into words and I think my strength lies in formulating with materials and forms. But it is something that I would like to learn and train myself in. Somehow to me it seems way easier to phrase a thing, when it is not your own work that you are looking at. So for now I will start with some words that came up from other people about work. Because I enjoy a lot how people see things and relate to my work. Harm Cordes, PhD student in fashion design at HDK in Bremen, Germany, once said to me that one of my weavings looked like sushi and another one like imprints of car tires on a muddy lawn. This is already two great connections to surroundings. The jacket was to me something in between a denim jacket and a woolen blanket whereas the blouse reminded me of the bedsheets in a place in the black forest where I used to spend vacations, or a kitchen towel mixed with medical gauze bandages. The fur pullover, once seen and worn for the first time, immediately made me think of Orangutans. So I started to watch some documentaries about these fascinating animals. The shorts could be a light version of bavarian leather pants or inuit skin shorts out of a fabric that portrays the needles of the fur trees creating some sort of tweed.

Marianne Bernecker (textile designer and professor at La Cambre in Brussels, Belgium) was my external tutor in this work. She detected cartridge belts in the wrap pullover and is absolutely right with that. It also fits in with the kind of camouflage that I was creating in the last three pieces. Another friend said the wrap pullover would be some kind of reptile shell. Maybe she thought of the ninja turtles. Did I make some kind of ninja turtle outfit? I firstly had Robin Hood in mind while weaving. At this point I stop the row of association for now. But it is so interesting to read what I am doing, clarifying and inspiring and at the same time a bit scary and psychic. How did I do this? Better not wonder too much. But reading it gives me very enlightening and valuable insights.

The aim: How I connect to the surroundings

I want to reflect a bit on my aim to connect with the surroundings and nature through wild and meaningful clothes. Above described references and insights show how I work integrally with my environment. Everything I do is connected to the things that happen around me, strange images that are catalyzed within me. In that way, my aim is phrasing exactly what I was doing. Maja Gunn, my professor in this Master's, raised the Question whether the connection to the surrounding that I want to create is happening through the body, hand and performance rather than through wildness and meaningfulness in the textiles. I would say it is all connected: The bodilyness, the "thinking" hands, the moving interaction in the loom are all important parts of my work process. They help me express and give me new inputs at the same time. They are parts of the catalyst leading to condensate.

I agree that the movement itself is being promoted in this work. That happens through the shapes of the clothes but also the short film that I made. And it is a mixture of weaving action and martial arts that is in these movements. They correspond to my feeling of fighting for something in my work. Fighting for an idea, fighting for meaning, for a good way to live on this damaged planet. In a way I can relate this back to the tradition of tapisserie as political art media.

Geometry (>< modernist values?)

I got some questions about modernist values and my position to them, also in relation to my work with geometry and the quotes of Anni Albers in this work. I tried to find a connection and reflect on that, but feel somehow, that all of these fragments have not so much to do with the modern in the end. The quotations from Anni Albers used in this text are not related to the Bauhaus or the ideas of modernism. Anni Albers wrote the book *"On Weaving"* in 1965. It contains basic knowledge about the history and the different types of hand weaving. She writes very well about the global history of weaving and the book is still an important basic reading for weaving today. For this reason I quote her.

The work with geometry and making garments fitting of the loom I relate back to my interest of working with (archetypical) basic shapes. Starting my three dimensional work with simple geometrical figures seems logical to me. I think I am following my affinity and interest for maths as a science that studies abstract intellectual constructs. I want to quote from the book *"Uncle Petros & Goldbach's Conjecture"* to describe my motivation to work in a mathematical way and with geometry:

Mathematicians [...] find the same enjoyment in their studies that chess players find in chess. In fact, the psychological make-up of the true mathematician is closer to that of the poet or the musical composer, in other words of someone concerned with the creation of Beauty and the search for Harmony and Perfection. He is the polar opposite of the practical man, the engineer, the politician or the [...] businessman. (Doxiadis, 2010, p. 29)

My work with geometry is not related to a modernist aim to simplify and rationalize design but roots in my interest in mathematics and the creation of beauty.

Conclusion and Result

In this Master Project I found a new way to make fashion design: I integrally combine the weaving of the fabric together with the shaping of the garment. I show, how this way of working and designing can lead to dense, expressive and “wild” clothes. They can be experienced through the senses closest to the body: touch and smell. I communicate aesthetically in form and matter: One can detect and sense the “wild” in the textiles I made through my formal work with light and shade, color gradients or hairy and endangered species such as the orangutan. With my body in the loom, I weave clothes for my (and other people’s) body. One can move freely in the clothes, the shapes interact with the movements through slits and openings in the cut. The clothing produced in this way represents a movement in the broader sense: it wants to motivate another way of sensing fashion; it wants to activate an attentive, careful intra-action with clothes in order to bridge the alleged gap between us humans and our surroundings. With this work I want to show that the fact that we are part of everything is not threatening, but rather enriching and fulfilling. Open the cage!

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Wild Things: A Collection of Handwoven Couture

Image part



Fig. 1, *The image shows Anu Raud, an estonian textile artist, carrying her artwork "mother tree". It is a sculpture made from skirts of the island of Kihnu (1995).*



Fig. 2, *The Lesbian Shirt. From Body acts Queer (p. 2), by M. Gunn, Diss. Borås: Högskolan i Borås, 2016. Borås. Copyright [2016] by Maja Gunn. Reprinted with permission.*



Fig. 3, Vetements DHL t-shirt (2016)

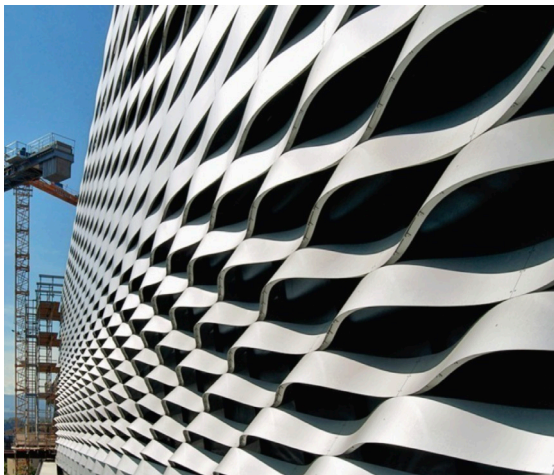


Fig. 4, Facade of a building of the Basel trade fair



Fig. 5, "Breathe In Jacket" by Henrik Vibskov (2018)



Fig. 6, "Holidayversuvio" by BLESS



Fig. 7, "Holidayrainbow" by BLESS



Fig. 8, *The 127° Angle Dress*, Luisa Recker



Fig. 9, *The Number Pullover*, Luisa Recker



Fig. 10 *The Black Hole of the Sundays collection, Luisa Recker*



Fig. 11, *Sample of the Black Hole of the Sundays collection, sewn in other fabric*



Fig. 12, *Bronze Age Blouse of the girl of Egtved*

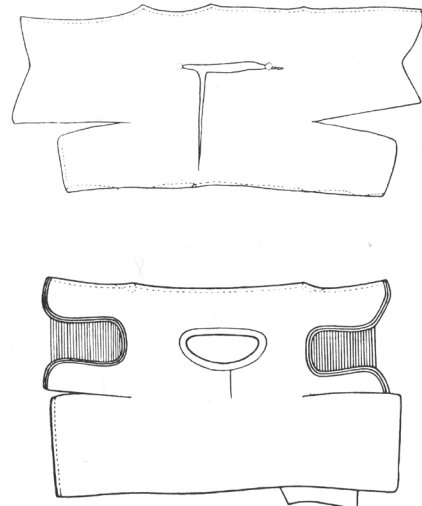


Fig. 13, *Pattern of the Bronze Age (buried in Jutland, Denmark, approximately 1400 BC) Blouse reminds of the shape of animal skins*



Fig. 14, Coat, woven in shape, Luisa Recker (2016)



Fig. 15, Woven beach Top/ Poncho, Luisa Recker (2016).



Fig. 16, Woven Pants, Luisa Recker
(2017)

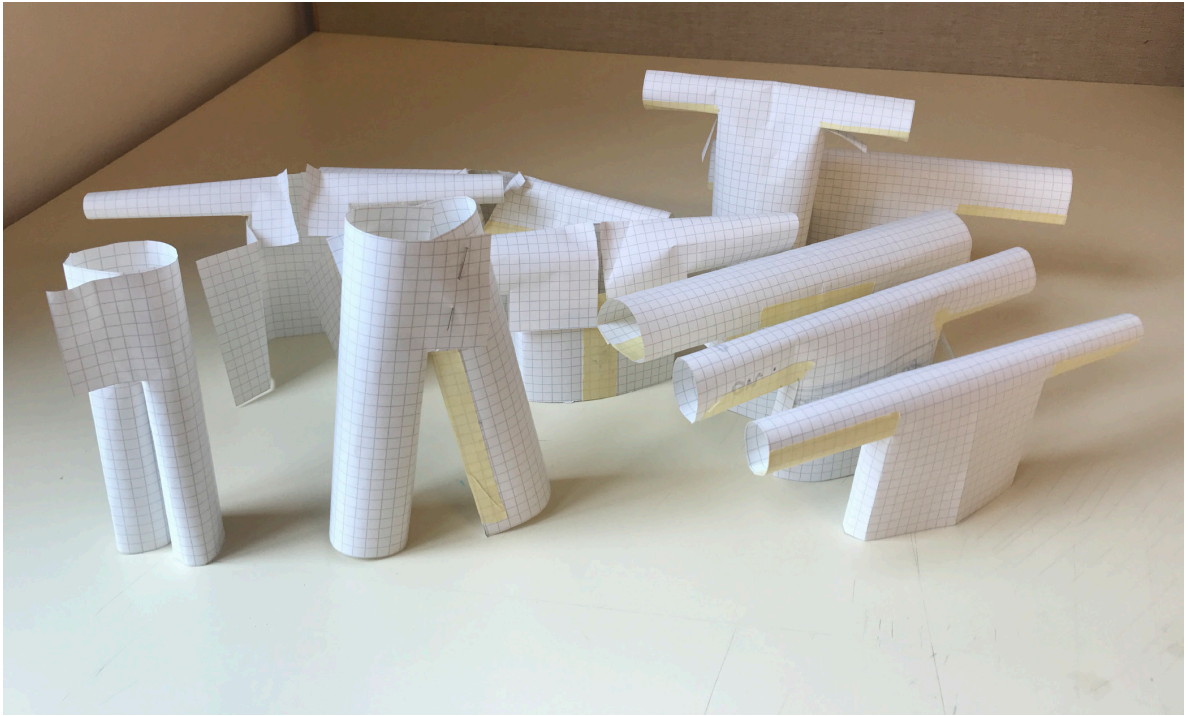


Fig. 17, Paper foldings of garment shapes in 1:10. Different pullovers, pants, jackets, a dress



Fig. 18, Pants, short and wide.

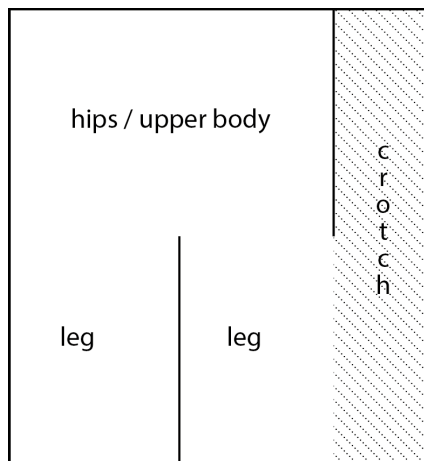


Fig. 19, Pattern of the pants.



Fig. 20, Pants, long and hip-wide.

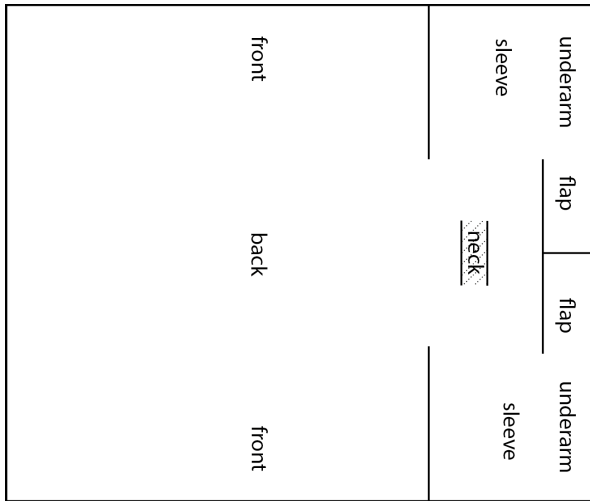


Fig. 21, Pattern of the dress.

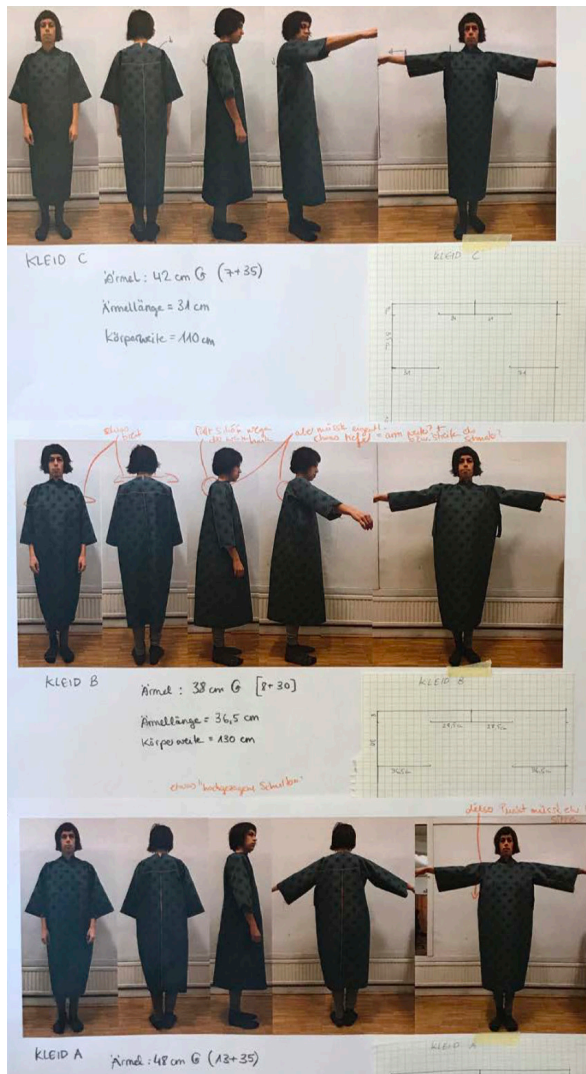


Fig. 23, Coat. Shorter sleeves and narrow body, using some width for overlap in the center front.

Fig. 22, Three variations of a dress / upper body garment with sleeves.



Fig. 24, *Miniature version of a flat jacket.*



Fig. 25, *Different weaving samples.*



Fig. 27, The two sides of a quilt-like double layer weave, left side is before bathing in water, right side is washed.

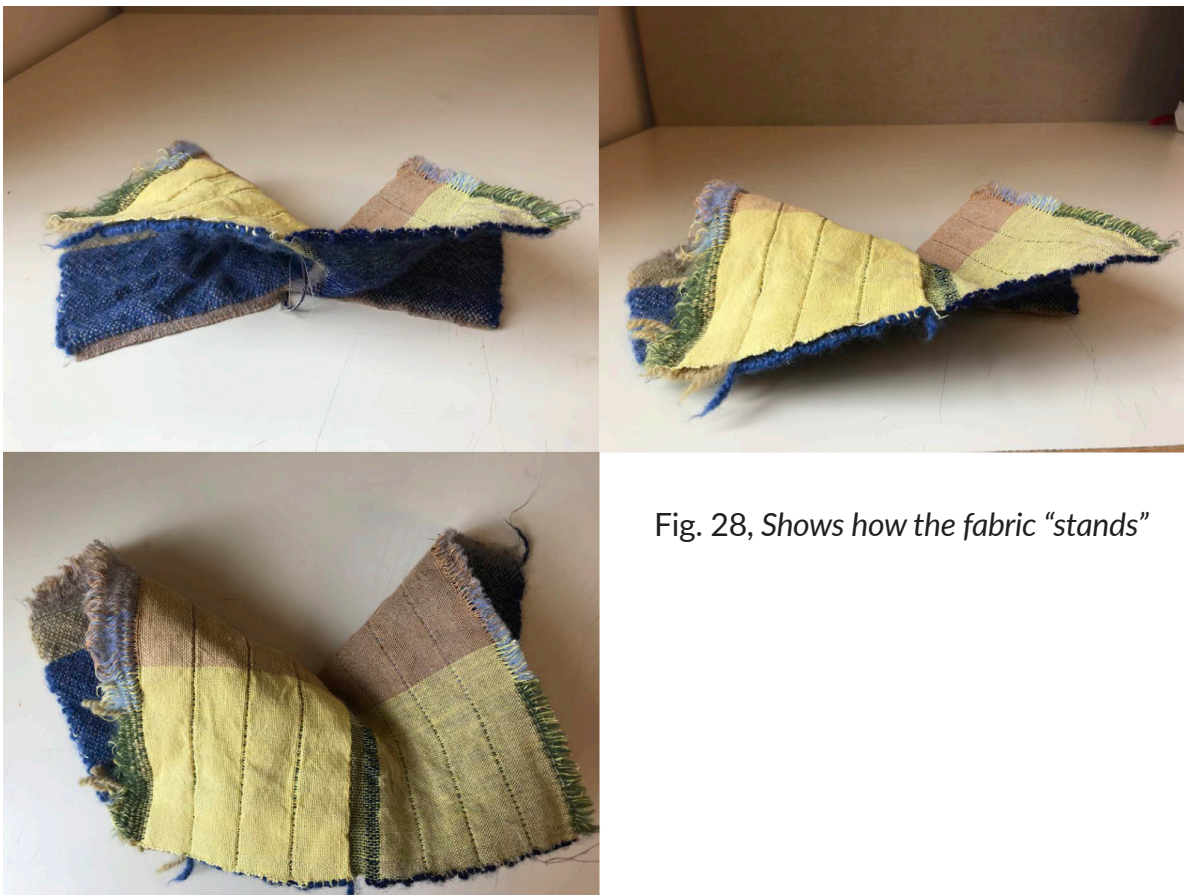


Fig. 28, Shows how the fabric "stands"



Fig. 29, "Map" of the Jacket, as it is woven in a flat piece of fabric on the loom.



Fig. 30, *The Jacket, twice cut, then assembled in one seam.*



Fig. 31, Workplace with weaving samples.

Fig. 32, Seven toiles.





Fig. 33, Simulation of the drafts in different weavings.



Fig. 34, *Flat piece of the woven blouse*



Fig. 35, *Blouse*

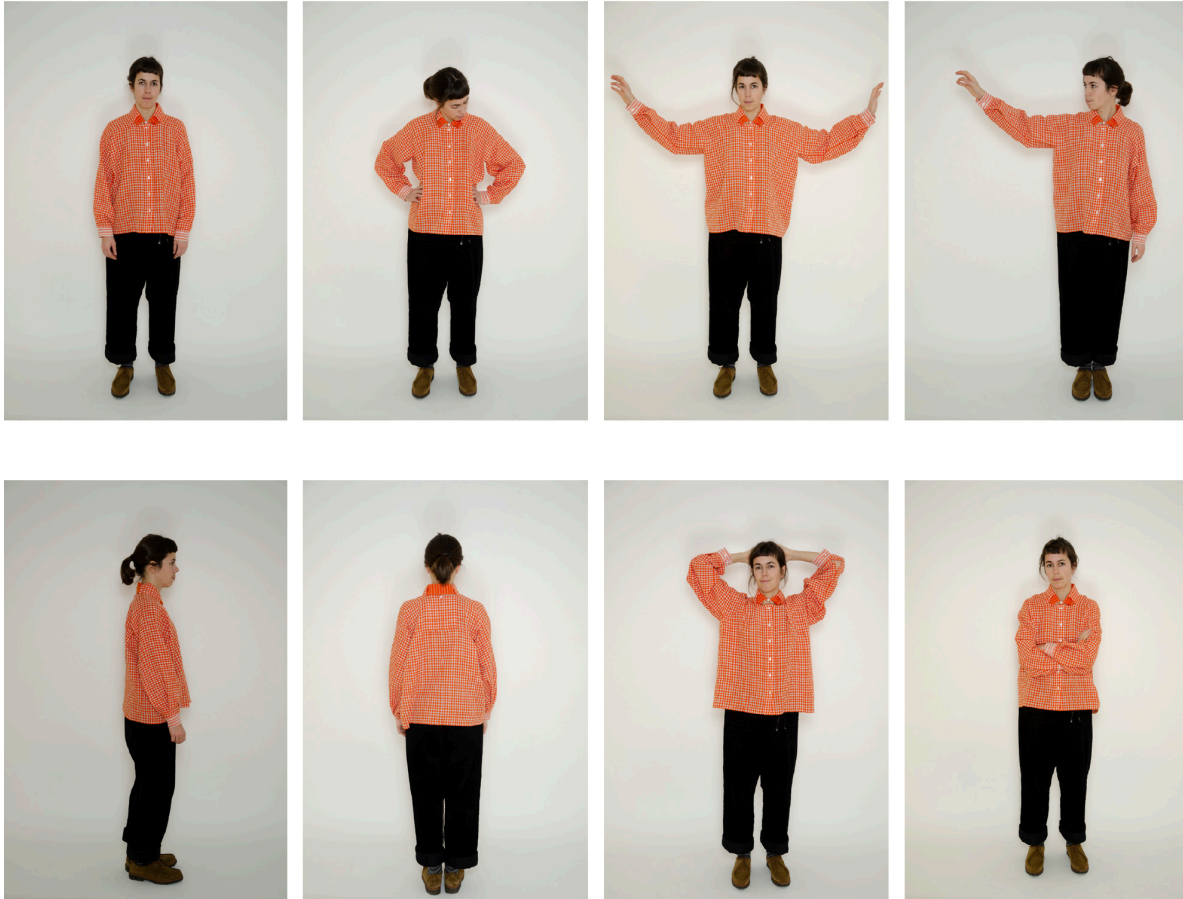


Fig. 36, Blouse worn

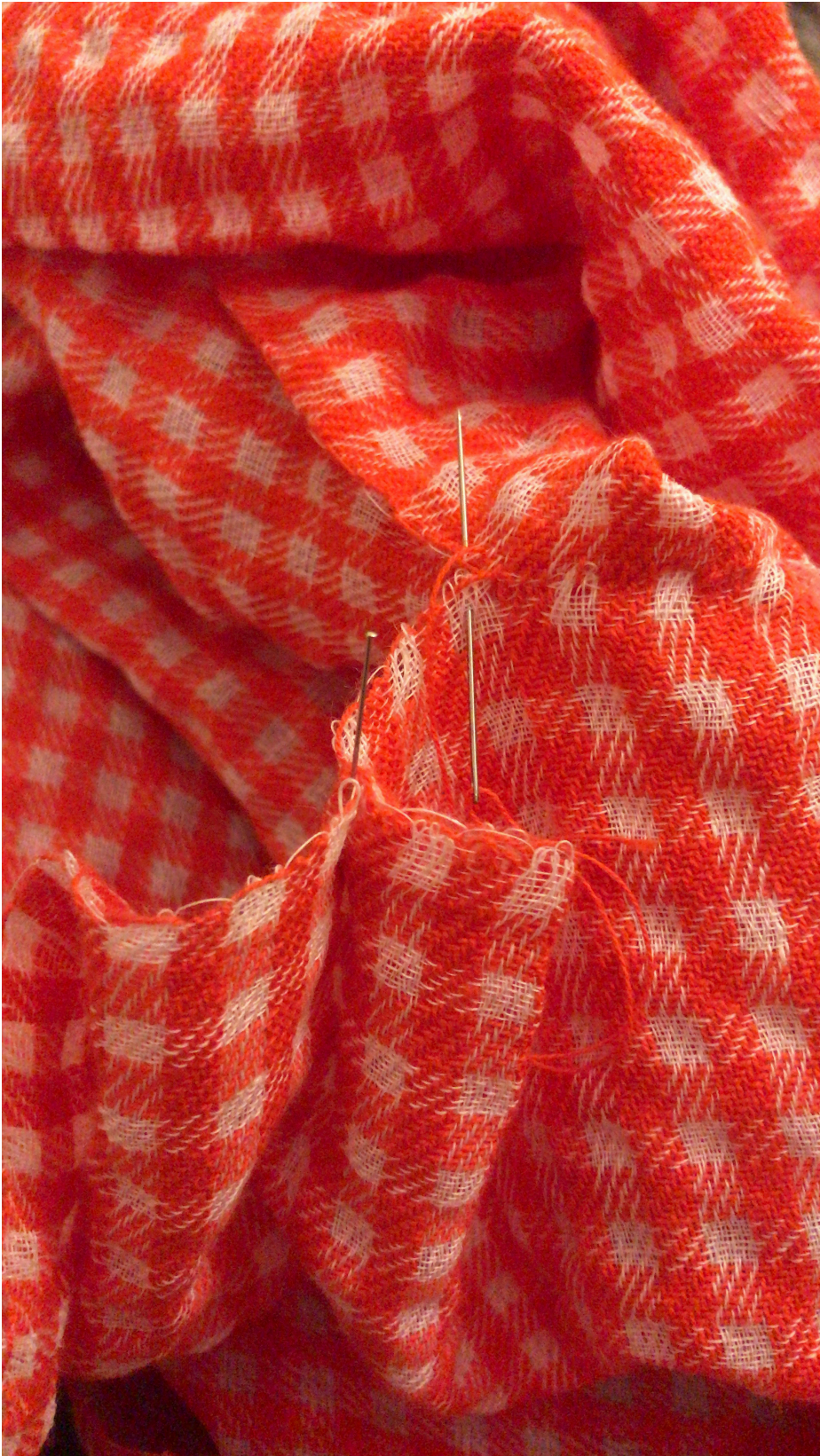


Fig. 37, *Delicate handling/ surgery of the woven fabric.*



Fig. 38, *Flat piece of the woven pullover.*



Fig. 39, *Fur Pullover.*



Fig. 40, The pullover how it is worn





Fig. 41, *Flat piece of the woven pants.*



Fig. 42, *Pants.*



Fig. 44, *View into a leg of the pants.*



Fig. 45, *The worn pants.*



Fig. 43, *Detail image of the pocket*



Fig. 46, *Outfit combinations of the first four woven garments (1)*





Fig. 47, *Outfit combinations of the first four woven garments (2)*



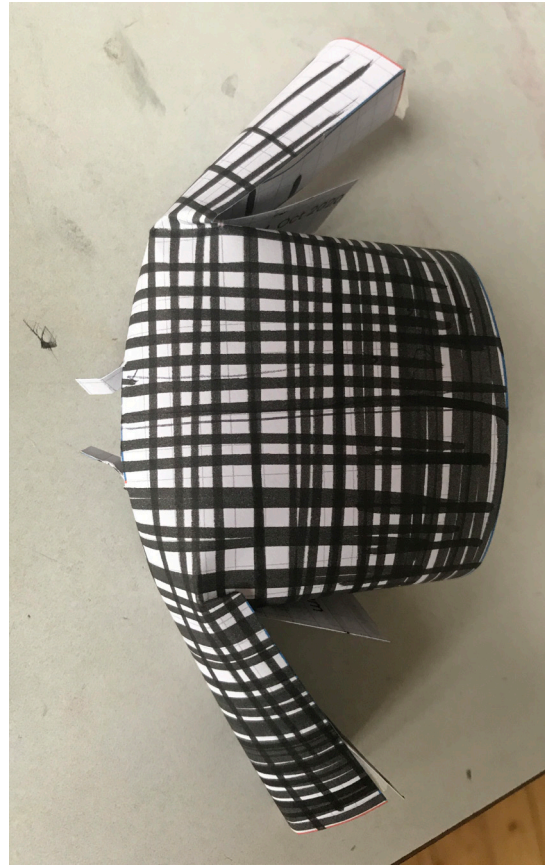
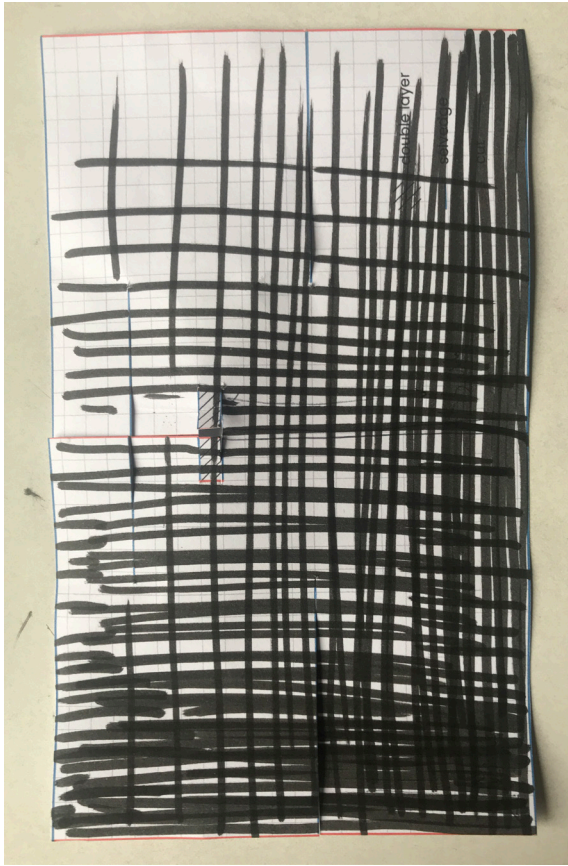


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Fig. 49, *Yarns twisted around paper to try out different colour and material mixings.*



Fig. 50, Weaving samples working with light and shade and different color gradients.

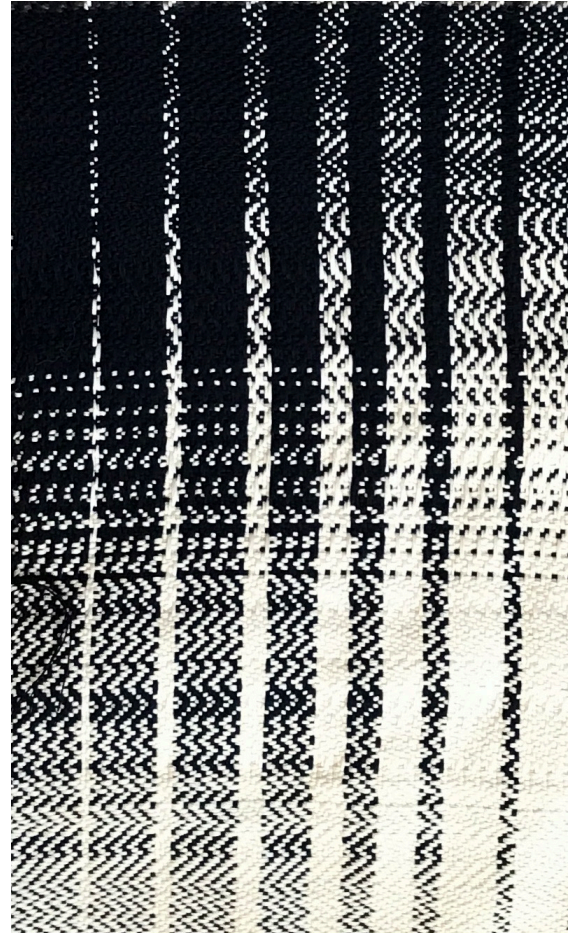


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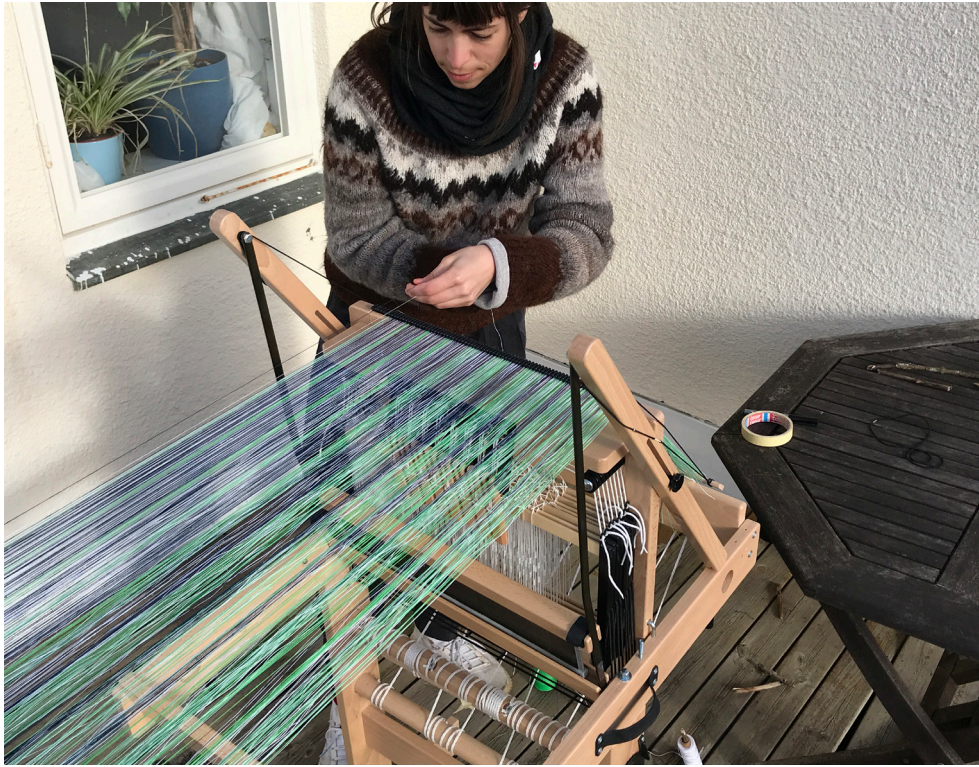


Fig. 52, *Warping in blue and green on the balcony.*



Fig. 53, *Weaving samples in the blue-green warp*



Fig. 54, *Draping a wrap - pullover on Klara.*



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Fig. 58, *Wrap-pullover.*



Fig. 59, *The fabric for the shorts (right part) and top (left part)*



Fig. 60, Top



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Fig. 63, Collection of seven handwoven clothes, result of MA Project by Luisa Recker, 2021



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