

Optimum Versatility

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Textiles with Surface Design

Inspired by the manufacturing of wool, Optimum Versatility extends the use of wool by exceeding the expectations of its capabilities to perform. By critically experimenting with wool and elastomeric yarn to understand the limits of the material pairing, I have made appropriate choices to create a functional fabric which transcends the processes of production.

I have a very experimental approach to weaving which is a response to my investigative and inquisitive interest in materials and processes. I consider myself to be a designer maker in that respect, always playing around with different materials. By trying to transfer this designer maker approach to larger production by using the Jacquard power loom, I was also optimising the versatility of wool without compromising the capabilities of the loom. Considering this, a variety of weave techniques and materials have been explored to obtain the full potential of photographic imagery, and to effectively demonstrate the recovery of the elastomeric yarn combining with lambswool. Techniques such as double cloth, damask, weft reversible, pockets and Shibori base weaves have been used to obtain the full potential of the Jacquard loom.

I explored colour within the collection by using a gradient effect through the warp. Rich, warm colours and blending shades were used to translate a luxury interior theme inspired by a mood of suspicion and uncertainty with the impression of recent lingering departure or pending arrival. The use of the gradient warp gave me the ability to achieve a selection of colour effects without compromising the design detail when inserting the weft colours. This approach has allowed the designs to represent different degrees of lightness and darkness with one design by taking full advantage of a 12inch repeat when weaving.

This collection challenged the materials, processes and my own technical abilities. I came across obstacles during the production of the fabric which forced me to make appropriate technical and design choices without compromising either. This level of risk taught me to problem solve through investigation, think outside of the box and ultimately it taught me progress within my weaving specialism. I believe Optimum versatility has a lot of potential as I finished the project with more ideas than when I started, it really taught me a lot.