

Transformation | Hannah Robson

Transformation is a new sculpture commissioned by The Harris and the British Textile Biennial. The work responds to research into Rayon making and the Courtaulds factory in Preston, drawing from the material held at the museum.

The need to make textiles is fundamental and it has shaped our social structures and the physical arrangements of our towns and cities. Yarn is the first building block in the making of cloth. Rayon was the first commercially viable artificial fibre. The idea of creating a new fibre through human innovation was dreamt of long before Rayon was eventually developed. As far back as 1665, Robert Hooke considered this possibility while studying the structures of silk under his microscope. The long-shared dream of creating an artificial fibre emphasises the importance of thread for human life. It also speaks of a human curiosity to speculate, solve problems, explore and innovate. Rayon is made from cellulose (usually wood pulp or other plant matter) which is transformed into thread via chemical processing. It was an early man-made fibre and represents significant innovation. The first commercially viable version of Rayon was created by Courtaulds in 1905, Red Scar Works, a Courtaulds factory in Preston, was a major production site until it closed in 1979. Rayon has been used extensively in fashion for its soft, draping qualities; it has also been used in technical applications: such as parachutes, tensile ropes and car tyres. In the factory, wood pulp is transformed through steeping, shredding, ageing, xanthation, ripening and extruding – each stage changing its material properties through chemical reactions. As the mixture travels through the factory it shifts between solid and liquid states. The moment when it chemically becomes rayon, it is a bright orange liquid, before being extruded into yarn. The final stage of the process is to wash the yarn with bleach. Hannah has sought to capture the idea of material transformation and celebrate the magic of yarn. She has created a 18m textile sculpture. Most the piece is made from paper yarns – another material made from cellulose. The sculpture has been made through hand-weaving and knotting threads. Seven precise three-dimensional woven shapes are connected by continuous threads which shift and twist in space, reorganising into different formations for each three-dimensional element. Coloured rayon yarns are interconnected with the paper, some have been bleached to change the colours through the piece. Hannah has used colours which reference the materials of the factory – the off white of the wood pulp, the black of coal, the orange of liquid rayon - along with some bright surprise colours created through the bleaching process. Knotting has also been used to construct the form. Tying a knot is an action synonymous with yarn. It is a commonplace action of the hands, but it also has an industrial counterpoint. The knots in this sculpture have been tied with an industrial knotting machine – usually used in weaving factories to prepare warps for production. They are perfectly precise and consistent. Hannah is interested in the relationships between handmaking and industrial production – the connections between hands and machines.

Hannah Robson

Hannah Robson is an artist and weaver interested in the spatial qualities of textiles and how their quiet ubiquity makes them a potent marker of time, change and human life. She explores the relationship between textiles and architecture: how textiles can amplify the elemental changes in environments, using the interplay of light and shadow, subtle shifts in density and texture. She is an experienced technical weaver and draws on rich histories of textile making. She creates three-dimensional sculptural textiles directly on the loom, seeking to extend the possibilities of weaving.

2026 Post Graduate Diploma in Education and Training, Bradford College, Leeds Trinity University,
2016 MA in Textiles (Weave) from Royal College of Art, **2014** BA (Hons) First Class in Textile Design, Specialising in Weave from Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, **2013** ERASMUS at ENSCI - Les Ateilers, Paris.

Recent Solo Shows: 2025 Transformation **British Textile Biennial x The Harris**, Preston 2023; The Jacquard Project **1912 Building, Sunny Bank Mills**, Leeds 2019; Seeking Silence **Aesop Stores** New York, Paris, Munich, Taipei & Sydney; Bizarre and Curious Silks **Huguenot Museum & Rochester Art Gallery** 2018.
Selected Group Shows: 2025 The New Naturals **Another Country**, London; Loops & Continuums **Sunny Bank Mills**, Leeds; 40 Dimensions, **&Gallery**, Edinburgh 2024; Making Spaces **Decorex, Kensington Olympia**, London; Unspun **Saltaire Arts Trail** Saltaire, Yorkshire, The Spring Show **The Art Court**, Leeds; 2023 Woven Stories **Sunny Bank Mills**, Leeds; Cut and Fold **Make Hauser & Wirth Somerset**, Bruton, Somerset

Jacqueline Moore

Jacqueline Moore's career began with photography, working within the fields of portrait and dance before establishing her own London-based agency, Black Dog Represents in the late 1990's. She spent over twenty years as the director, representing photographers across design, advertising and editorial, directing and producing global campaigns and curating photography exhibitions. She was also ambassador and patron for the Photographers Gallery, London, supporting the gallery's move from Covent Garden to Ramillies Street and fostering links with clients and related industries. She extended her representation to craft artists, with a material focus on ceramic and wood, showing work through her Moore Gallery pop ups. She was keen to promote and support the work of artist-makers in London and Somerset, having been a passionate collector of the crafted object and contemporary craft for many years, with a special interest in British studio ceramics, wood sculpture and the evolution of material investigation in the applied arts. In 2018, she was approached by Hauser & Wirth Somerset to establish a craft focussed gallery in Bruton, Somerset, an extension of the main Hauser & Wirth Somerset site. With a responsibility for the gallery's remit and strategy, she developed a 5 show per year exhibition program for Somerset and took the format to London, UK, Southampton, NY and Los Angeles, USA and Zurich, Switzerland. Across a 7-year period, she worked with over 100 craftspeople and curated over 45 shows worldwide, changing the landscape for craft exhibition and appreciation. Jacqueline continues to originate craft exhibition content as an independent curator whilst running a crafts collection advisory service.

Jacquelinemoore07@icloud.com +44 (0) 7774 229322