Textiles 3

Personal Specialism
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Textiles 3: Personal Specialism

Introduction

Lee Borthwick, Small Mirror Tapestry, www.leeborthwick.co.uk
Photographer: Matthew Booth
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Textiles now and next

There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.  
Francis Bacon (2008, p.129)

As you enter and become immersed in the final level of your Textiles degree studies, you’ll build on your growing knowledge, experience and understanding of textiles and seek to identify a current place and focus for your work. An excellent awareness of contemporary contexts for your work will be a guiding force, but you’ll rapidly find that you also need to formulate a personal viewpoint and allow this to inform the visual, tactile, sensory and investigative direction of your work.

It’s very important at this stage to consider what textiles mean or could mean to you:

- What do you find beautiful in textiles?
- What do you find inspiring in textiles?
- What are textiles to you?
- How can you create beautiful and inspiring contemporary textiles?

In the context of contemporary art and design, the term ‘textiles’ is increasingly replaced by the term ‘materials’. This opening up of textiles to encompass all kinds of materials and processes pushes the boundaries of the discipline. On the one hand, you could view this as diffusing the nature of textiles as a discipline. But you could also regard this development as an aspiration to elevate the textile specialist’s knowledge and approach to materials, through their affinity and experience of the qualities and handling of texture, weight, colour, pattern, form, structure, drape and many visual and material properties.

Textile specialists are now employed in fields that span from the traditional to the technological. A valuing of craftsmanship co-exists with a continuing embrace of technology. Beautifully executed couture embroideries have an equal, albeit different, value to the finite engineering of a mobile phone. Textile specialists are sought in both of these industries and many more besides. At the same time innovation happens at the interface where craft meets technology.

- Where do you fit within this spectrum of activity?
- Where does your work fit within – or perhaps between – these contrasting elements?
- What is/are your textiles specialism/s?

Textile, surface and material qualities are the drivers in many current artworks, from Karla Black’s ephemeral and chalky cosmetic and textile material pieces through to Ptolemy Mann’s opaque woven colour-controlled installations. There is also a move to markedly more decorative work in installations, such as Richard Wright’s Turner Prize-winning gold leaf installation and Gabriel Dawe’s striking thread pieces.

Lee Borthwick’s work has evolved from her background as a mixed media textile artist to the use of sculpted and laser-cut wood and acrylic and her employment of materials, processes and contexts less traditionally affiliated with textiles. (See the image at the start of this introduction.)
As you begin this course, you’ll work towards establishing the focus of your personal textiles specialism. This may not sit within a traditional textile discipline; it may even work against it. And your chosen specialism now probably won’t be your only specialism – just where you see yourself and your work at this moment in time.

It’s very much up to you to identify where you place yourself within or against the current scope of textiles. Your chosen context might be one that has evolved naturally from the work and materials you’ve engaged with over previous courses and through the areas of study you’ve tackled. Or you may just be beginning to discover an area you’re drawn to within the textile discipline. You may find that you want to unite your experience of textiles, skills and talent with a quite separate area of expertise. This may result in you taking a multi-disciplinary approach to your specialism.

*Personal Specialism* will start by taking you through a strong process of self-review and evaluation of your work and working processes to date so that you can make informed, exciting and inspiring decisions for your textile development direction in this course – and beyond. Over the duration of the course, your aim should be to consolidate all of your previous learning, interests, skills and talent and direct it towards your chosen ambitions on completing the degree. These interests and ambitions will be entirely different for, and personal to, every student. You’ll find that your peers have quite different creative outcomes and outputs from what you envisage for yourself.

You’ll start with the important task of identifying, reviewing, defining, shaping, re-shaping and, finally, editing your intentions for the major body of investigation and work – your personal project – that you’ll create during your work on *Textiles 3: Personal Specialism*. Your project proposal should give you both freedom and self-imposed constraints; it should guide you, push you and challenge you. You probably won’t be able to cover everything you’d like to or everything you have ideas for. In fact, you should think of this course as a large, in-depth project that will allow you to explore a narrow area of focus in great detail. As well as forming a kind of conclusion to your textile degree work, it’s also a launch pad for future exploration – not an end point in itself. Indeed, you’ll have the opportunity to further develop the work you produce in this course towards a continually building professional output in the *Textiles 3: Sustaining your Practice* course.
Your project proposal will be informed by the educational outcomes you’re required to attain so now’s a good time to take a look at the learning outcomes for this course.

**Textiles 3: Personal Specialism learning outcomes**

On successful completion of this course you’ll be able to:

- Demonstrate the use of analysis and creative thinking in interpreting and responding to self-initiated and other projects.
- Show proficiency in using personal visual language and practical work to communicate ideas effectively.
- Show both the technical scope and a critical and contextual understanding of a chosen textile process or processes.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop ideas and sustain a project from its inception to final outcomes that take into account the audience and/or requirements of the client.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how your own work connects with market forces, commission work and/or exhibition opportunities for textile outcomes and within the context of contemporary art and design.

Take a moment to consider how you might be able to demonstrate these outcomes in your work, and also take time to look at the assessment criteria. If you’re at all uncertain of what these outcomes mean, ask your tutor for guidance.
Assessment criteria
The assessment criteria are central to the assessment process for this course; you'll need to take note of these criteria and consider how each of the assignments you complete demonstrates evidence of each criterion. (There’s help with this at the end of Part One.) On completion of each assignment, and before you send your assignment to your tutor, test yourself against the criteria – in other words, do a self-assessment, and see how you think you would do. Note down your findings for each assignment you’ve completed in your learning log, noting all your perceived strengths and weaknesses, taking into account the criteria every step of the way. This will be helpful for your tutor to see, as well as helping you prepare for assessment.

Assessment criteria points
• Demonstrated technical and visual skills - Materials, techniques, observational skills, visual awareness, design and compositional skills.
• Quality of outcome - Content, application of knowledge, presentation of work in a coherent manner, discernment, conceptualisation of thoughts, communication of ideas.
• Demonstration of creativity - Imagination, experimentation, invention, development of a personal voice.
• Context - Reflection, research, critical thinking.
Textiles at Level 3
The structure and relationship between the three Level 3 textiles courses is different from Levels 1 and 2.

The courses you’ll undertake at Level 3 are:

Textiles 3: Personal Specialism (40 credits)

Textiles 3: Research (40 credits)

Textiles 3: Sustaining your Practice (40 credits)

You should work on the Personal Specialism and Research courses concurrently, to allow the predominantly creative work demanded by Personal Specialism to inform the predominantly research and written work of the Research course, and vice versa. The third and final course of the Textiles degree, Textiles 3: Sustaining your Practice, will be directly informed by the work you generate during these first two courses.

The diagram below shows how Personal Specialism and Research could work concurrently to give you the maximum benefit from both courses.

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If you’re able to follow this ordering, you should find you have space to identify and develop your own personal direction for your creative work, in tandem with identifying and developing your focus for your research and written work. The work you do for each course will inform the other, resulting in a strong, integrated and robust body of work and thinking. But as with all OCA courses, you’re free to work in the way that best suits you and fits in with your other commitments.

You’ll have two tutors – one for each course. Tutors will only provide formal feedback on their own course but, in the light of the close relationship between the two courses, it may be helpful to keep both tutors updated on your progress with the Level 3 programme as a whole.

Both courses build though a number of exercises and smaller projects to allow you to put into practice different scenarios. These will enable you to explore different options for your Personal Specialism and Research focus and also allow you to gain new skills in formulating and testing new proposals and work ideas. You’ll focus on generating a very thorough, well-researched and exciting body of written and practical work where every aspect is useful, informative and impacts on your self-directed learning and practical work.

**Expectations at Level 3**

Progressing from Level 2 to Level 3 will be a challenge and you’ll be expected to raise the level of the work you produce and demonstrate professionalism in what you do. We expect you to demonstrate a thoroughness and in-depth knowledge and ability and be able to apply this new learning at an advanced level. With the support of your tutor, you’ll be setting your own project proposal so you’ll define your own processes and the results that you intend to produce over the duration of the course. At this level, though, there’s a particular emphasis on building and taking ownership of your own work as well as the selection of working methods. For this reason you’ll find that Parts One and Two of the course guide you through a series of exercises and projects to get you started while Parts Three to Five provide general guidance and advice but otherwise leave you to manage your own project in your own way.

Your personal project proposal should identify your direction, aims and intentions, state how you’ll carry these out, justify the scope of your proposal and set a timeframe for your chosen project. Part One will help you to formulate this proposal and give advice on how to manage different aspects of the process. The course is designed to take around 400 hours to complete; 20% of this (80 hours) is learning log time. It’s up to you to decide how to manage the remaining 320 hours, in discussion with your tutor. At this level of study, though, you may find that you have to go over and above the suggested time to achieve the outcomes you’re aiming for.

As well as following your own proposal, you’ll be encouraged to push the boundaries of your project and to take directions you weren’t expecting at the outset. Some will be very successful, others less so. If you’re truly pushing yourself you shouldn’t see the less successful outcomes as failures, but rather as markers you can learn from before switching and manoeuvring towards the best outcomes. Equally, playful experimentation, whether through materials, techniques or perhaps presentation methods, allows room for unexpected – and often pleasantly surprising – results.
Although your personal specialism will initially be grounded in your prior work and current engagement with textiles, think how you want to develop your skills and learning. Are there software or textile/making techniques that you want to engage with to help you build on or improve an area of work you’re already engaged with? There could be scope for you to build in mini-projects that allow you to do this.

Think also about how you’re going to communicate what you’re doing – to your tutor, the assessors, your OCA peers and others. At Level 3, you’re expected to be able to communicate your work and ideas effectively. There’s no single way to do this; you have to find the most appropriate and effective means to communicate your own projects and your own type of work.

Don’t feel limited by the fact that you’re a distance learner! If you want to scale your work to the size of the side of a building, that’s absolutely fine, provided it’s justified or indeed demanded by your proposal and the research you’ve carried out. In this case, the challenge would lie in how to communicate this scale and placement of your work to your tutors and/or peers, and for assessment. This may involve finding new ways of recording and presenting, including video and photography, and perhaps working with collaborators to do this. Aim to find ways around
any limitations arising from your status as a distance learner. Discuss these challenges with your tutors. There is often a plausible and (quite often) innovative solution.

Finally, as you progress through your Level 3 courses, you’ll be introduced to the types of thinking and possible approaches you can seek to employ in a personal project. However, the examples given are by no means exhaustive and we hope you can work to challenge the norms and commonly accepted approaches, through strong research, reasoning and thinking to back up your ideas and results. Be brave, be experimental and be prepared to engage with the unexpected.

**Submitting work to your tutor for review (not for assessment)**
Package up your work from the section of the course you’ve completed. This should be sent in an A1 portfolio plus a box if necessary. Tutors are keen to see your sketchbooks but please submit just ONE sketchbook each time you send work to your tutor for review. You can insert this into the portfolio. You should also include the relevant section of your learning log, unless you can email this to your tutor. If you keep a learning blog, provide the url to your tutor.

Please note that assignments sent to your tutor for review should weigh no more than 5 kg. This includes the weight of the portfolio and sketchbook. If your work weighs more than this there will be a surcharge for postage and administration to return your work.
Textiles 3: Personal Specialism

Part one
Reviewing your work

Marie Paysant-Leroux, www.marieplrdesign.com
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**Assignment one**
Project 1.1 Review, select and edit

In Part One of this course you’ll engage in processes that will allow you to review, evaluate, select and then engage with and edit your textiles work to date.

*It’s much easier to think for 8 hours, and work for 2, than the opposite.*

As well as applying these processes from the outset, you’re also encouraged to engage in and value your thinking time. This will allow you to develop your work thoroughly and to extend its development from this point.

This first project is made up of the following three preliminary exercises.

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

OCA student Jessica Stroud
Exercise 1 Your working process

As a brief exercise, consider what the following terms mean in the context of your own creative working process. Think about how and when you’ve employed these activities in your previous work and make some notes in your learning log.

**Review**  **Evaluate**  **Select**  **Engage**  **Edit**

Secondly, consider what you’d need to do in practical terms in order to carry out these activities in relation to work you’ve already created at Levels 1 and 2. Ask yourself:

- How can I set about reviewing my own work?
- How can I evaluate my own work and what should I focus on when doing this?
- What do I need to consider when making selections from my work?
- How can I further engage with or promote engagement with my work?
- How can I edit my work and what is my framework for selection and omission?
- In practice, will I undertake these processes in a linear sequence or will I jump back and forth between them? Why?

Begin by writing out some notes in your learning log or blog to explore the terms and questions above. You may find some overlaps in your interpretation of these terms, but it’s important that you can identify some differences too. While you’re considering them, really think about your own work and projects that you’ve worked on to date.

Consider Mirko Ilić’s comment, ‘Think 8 hours, work 2 hours’.

- What does Ilić mean by this phrase?
- Would this balance of work and thinking be a positive or negative thing for you? Is it too much thinking and not enough working?
- Would it work at certain times in your creative process, but not at other times?
- How much importance do you place on your thinking time?
- Based on the Introduction to this course, do you feel you need to make more room for thinking in this course than you have previously?

Also, think about why you’re being asked to deal with these questions now, at the beginning of Level 3 of your studies. Reflection on your work has been embedded in your learning with OCA from the outset. At this point, you need to review all aspects of your working process, from the balance of time you give to different aspects of your work, to the nature of the tasks you allocate, to aspects of the creative process, such as reviewing and editing. How can you improve these?
Exercise 2 Reviewing and editing work

Before you apply the working process outlined above to your own work, you may find it useful to review and edit someone else’s.

Identify a suitable body of work by another artist, designer or company. The body of work you choose to focus on should be of a significant size. For example, you could focus on an upholstery textile collection in a department store, a solo exhibition in a gallery, a themed (group) exhibition in a gallery, an online exhibition, a fashion collection (this could be from fashion show images online or through actually seeing a collection of garments in a store), a collection of products/textiles exhibited at a trade or selling show, a wallpaper collection, or any other substantial body of presented work. This need not be a collection of textile work, but it should be a collection or collation that you’re interested in.

- Once you’ve viewed the work, apply the processes of reviewing and evaluating. Consider the individual pieces as well as their place within the whole show or collection. How do they function? Be critical – what works well and what doesn’t work well in your opinion? Just because something has been given a showcase doesn’t mean that it’s perfect.

The difference between viewing this work and viewing your own, which you’ll do in the next exercise, is that here you’re viewing a collection that has already been selected, edited and presented for engagement, for an intended purpose and with a variety of reasoning.

- Try to identify why these pieces have been selected. Is it quite clear, because there’s a theme to the whole body of work? Are there anomalies? Would you have had a different emphasis if you were curator?
- How would you edit this collection to make it more succinct? If you were to remove parts of the collection, would it change the overall impact and meaning of the collection or exhibition? How?
- How has work been presented for engagement with an audience? Who do you think the audience is? What improvements would make the engagement stronger, more humorous, more dynamic, subtler, more contemporary, more informative? Is the environment right? What would be the most appropriate mood and approach for allowing a particular audience to engage with the work? Could the audience be expanded or a different audience be addressed? How would you do this? If you believe there are limitations on cost, could the actual designs or work be developed or altered to meet the demands of a different audience?
Exercise 3 Reviewing and editing your own work

Now carry out the same process with your own textile work to date. You’ll need to refer back to all the textile and creative work you’ve created and accumulated. You may have this in an organised portfolio format or you may simply have each project and assignment separately. Some work may be digital while other work may be physical. Depending on your starting point, you’ll need to consider how best to carry out this process.

This will feel like a very different process from the one you’ve just carried out. When you don’t have ownership or intimate knowledge of a body of work, it can be much easier to be critical. It can also mean that your decisions are based on a more instinctive response to the work, because you don’t know the ins and outs of why someone has chosen to represent and present it in a certain way. With your own work, on the other hand, you have in-depth knowledge of all aspects, from its inspiration to its final look and functional qualities and the problems you’ve overcome to achieve these.

Find a large floor or table space on which you can lay out and view your work. This will allow you to do the very simple thing of standing back from the whole body of work and gaining an overview.

Then, you need to break it all down.

• Are there clear themes evident in your work? These may be concerned with anything from colour use, to types of inspiration, to often-used techniques, to different formats for intended markets or individual pieces. Start to move your work around to fit one of the themes or categories you can see. You might want to write down a few words to sum up the groupings that arise. If possible, use a camera or phone to take some snapshots of the groups you can place your work into. Don’t be scared to pull out samples from different projects – even different levels – to place together, if they emphasise a particular direction or strength in your work. It can be helpful to lay out a roll or some large sheets of white paper so you can see your work against a blank canvas, without visual distractions. If you can, try pinning up individual pieces on a white wall to see them in a different way.

• Imagine you’re curating a show or portfolio of your own work that needs to read in a connected way, to tell a story. From single pages in your sketchbook to large textile pieces you’ve made, how can you arrange diverse elements of your work to tell a story or emphasise a point? What would hold your exhibition together? How would your folio read?

Try out as many alternative groupings of your work as you can. Take photos as you go and evaluate the options. Be tough in your decisions and make notes on what each grouping would project to an audience.

If you want to show your textile-making skills, only the very best, most perfectly finished pieces would perhaps suit this story. If you want to show your proficiency with colour, how can you show variety, but also a unified and coherent colour story, with your samples,
drawings and/or colour investigations? Are there gaps you'd need to fill to make the story stronger?

Is there a particular project that you feel already functions well as a whole and tells an effective story? If so, do you need to be strict with editing this so that an outside viewer can clearly understand the project and your strengths? Is there any unnecessary repetition or are there pieces that don't need to be there? Is the sequencing or order the best possible? Is there a need for brief annotations, or is there too much text? Is it important or possible to give a sense of 'work in progress' to the presentation of work that hasn't quite reached its potential yet?

Explore a broad range of different ways to present and re-present previous work. Trying out the options will give you a taste or reminder of what your strengths and weaknesses are. Record your different ideas and options both through a visual record and through your own notes. These will help you with the next stage, to reveal and engage.

Marie Paysant-Leroux, www.marieplrdesign.com
Image reproduced by kind permission of the artist.
Project 1.2 Reveal

Now that you’ve reviewed someone else’s work and begun to analyse your own, you’ll work towards further reviewing and then presenting an edited version of your own work to date in at least two different ways. You’ll reveal your work to your Personal Specialism tutor, then present your work in a different way to engage with a separate self-selected audience.

We’re all curators in one form or another, from choosing the objects we want to surround us at home, to the Facebook and Instagram photos we post (and those we choose not to), to the music playlists we construct and the radio stations we choose to listen to.

The same principles apply to curating your own work. You need to make choices and one of the factors you’ll need to address is the viewpoint of the audience who will experience your work. For this project you should aim to present a clear and informative folio of work that communicates your textile interests and personal directions within textiles and shows your strengths and potential both inside and beyond the discipline. You’ll decide the scale and format of this folio. It may be something physical that you can photograph beautifully to send to your tutor. Or it may be that generating a digital version of your folio is a main learning point for you in this process. Consider how focused you can be and how strongly you can project your work. Think of the themes, sequencing, groupings and even titles you give to parts of the folio. You’ve already tried this out in the previous exercise, so you should have a good starting point from which to work.

Every choice you make – from the size, choice of card, choice of font to the ease of physically leafing through your folio – adds to the impression you’re creating. The way in which you review, evaluate, edit and present your work should seek to demonstrate your work at its best. Be tough on yourself and be very selective in your method of presentation so that it shows your work and personal direction and place well. You’ll probably need to invest in new materials to re-present your work for this project. You may find that you also wish to insert some new pieces to allow the folio to make sense. Go ahead and do this if you feel it’s necessary.

You’ll submit this folio to your Personal Specialism tutor at the end of Part One.

You might want to make a second copy to submit to your Research tutor so that both tutors have a sense of where you are at the start of this Level 3 programme, but your Research tutor will not give you feedback on work you do for the Personal Specialism course, and vice versa.
Project 1.3 Engage

In this second project, you’ll present your folio or body of work in a different way and your choice of audience is paramount in directing how you do this. First of all, pick your audience. This will probably be determined by your circumstances, who you have access to and who you’re brave enough to show your work to. Which audience could you learn most from? The only rule in this project is that the audience should not be a tutor.

Once you’ve identified an audience and established that you can have access to them, you’ll need to adapt, re-select and possibly transform significantly the pieces you’ve chosen to show to your intended audience.

For example, if you want to present your work to a group of 7–9 year olds, how would you adapt the language of your presentation? What pieces would you show? How are they likely to engage with them? Do you need to make them more robust? Would it be appropriate to develop a small workshop idea so that you can engage them by showing how you worked with your materials?

If your audience is not so familiar with textiles, do you need to give some kind of introduction? Or is their lack of familiarity irrelevant? Alternatively, if you’re presenting to a professional, how can you adapt the language or style of presentation? Do you envisage a particular context for your Personal Specialism work? If so, could you engage with that audience for this exercise?

If your audience is online or overseas, what platform will you use to present your work? What works best online? How long can you hold your audience’s attention online? What is their expertise? What are they interested in?

Finally, how do you envisage engaging and getting responses and feedback to your work? Depending on your audience and the context within which you’re presenting your work, how can you record their responses? Can you make a video? Can you take notes or record a series of short interviews? How do you get online responses? Can you create a SurveyMonkey or ask viewers to add notes to a comment thread? Can you work to create an online discussion?

Research and explore the most effective way for you to reveal your own work and engage with the audience you’ve identified. Don’t worry if some of your ideas don’t work; this is a huge learning stage and represents a step towards getting your work out into the world. Self-initiated and self-directed study is a driving force of your textiles work at this level, so you need to be able to formulate your own parameters and set challenges for yourself.

Record the presentation you’ve created for your chosen audience. Also record the process of engagement and gather responses to your work in the way you find most appropriate and beneficial.
Develop directions

*Never stand still. If you stand still, you get lost, because someone else is always moving.*

[Accessed 04/08/14]

You’ve edited your work in two different ways and presented it in different formats to at least two different audiences – your tutor and your chosen audience.

Now consider what the results have been. What is the feedback and what do you need to change about the work and/or its presentation? Were there any responses that surprised or inspired you? What responses can help you direct your future work? It’s important to reflect on these and consider your next move. For example, you may want to narrow your focus onto a particular aspect; the development of your work throughout this course will demand that you narrow and broaden your focus constantly.
**Project 1.4 Don’t stop moving**

Now begin a new investigation in the form of a mini-project. This may be a sketchbook, file, series of loose sheets, series of photos, material exploration or whatever format suits you. Start building a body of new and personal visual work that reflects what you’ve gained from the earlier processes of review, select, edit, reveal and engage. At this point there’s no great need to look at other artists’ or designers’ work; this mini-project is simply to allow you to create some new work.

This first part of the *Personal Specialism* course is intended to enable you to identify possible directions for the personal development of your own work, based on your previous work and interests. However, you must also begin to think ahead as well as look back, to consider where you want to place your work and yourself in a near-future professional context. How can you push your work forward in a simple but effective, productive and personally enjoyable way? How will you let your future ambitions influence your work?

The most important part of this new investigation is simply not to stand still. You may be able to move your existing work forward in a clearly informed way, but this can also be a great time to take risks and explore the possibilities at the forefront of your mind at this early stage. You may find that you won’t eventually use these first ideas at all, but you still need to get them down on paper or try them out in order to move onto newer, even better ideas. By contrast, you might find that your first ideas are the best, so how do you push and explore these first ideas to test and ensure that this is the case? Can you bounce your thinking from your first ideas to feed new and unexpected directions?

In order to carry out your chosen investigation, set yourself a focused mini-project. Think about how you can keep this very narrow, so that you’re carrying out a very detailed or in-depth look at your chosen area. This should be something that allows you to delve deep and respond to your previous editing, review and engagement work.

To give yourself a structure, write a short description or proposal of what you want to do in this short project (AIMS), how you’ll do it (BRIEF), and what you hope to learn from it (OUTCOMES). A few examples are given below, to help you structure this short proposal – but the content must come from you!

**Proposal example 1**

**Aim/s:** To develop my drawing and observations of flowers on a range of scales.

**Brief:** Obtain a limited selection of individual seasonal flowers that will provide an enjoyable and inspiring source. Produce a beautiful self-made sketchbook full of drawing and collage, created from looking and analysing the flowers. Work on a broad range of different papers and materials and on scales from A0 down to postage stamp size.

**Outcomes:** To improve my looking and recording skills with flowers. To build a good, exploratory portfolio of new drawing. To translate flower shapes and forms through collage and work out where my strengths lie in this. To view and record colour in a creative way.
Proposal example 2

Aim/s: To further explore how Tyvek material can be manipulated through folding, stitching, coating and a combination of these processes (beginning from a limited but successful exploration carried out previously). To learn more about tessellations and try to apply them to this mini-project.

Brief: Source a variety of different weights and finishes of Tyvek to work with. Create different textures, surface patterns and 3D patterns through manipulation of the material. Create a book of new 2D geometric patterns, created using Illustrator software, to feed the material development.

Outcomes: To improve my understanding of the material. To see whether this material has the scope to be used for future work and to understand its limitations better. To improve my computer skills to generate simple abstract, geometric artwork. To ignore colour use at the moment in order to learn about pattern translation from 2D to 3D.

Proposal example 3

Aim/s: To explore different materials through using a restricted colour palette.

Brief: Build a restricted colour palette. Make a colour book that demonstrates applications of that palette. Explore the colour palette through presenting different proportions and balances of colour in order to gain unexpected results. Experiment as much as possible with placement and qualities of the chosen colours in relation to a collection of textile and non-textile materials.

Outcomes: To become more comfortable with using colours and how to stick with a limited and directional colour palette. To find solutions to improve my focus on colour proportion and balance of colour through simple placement of coloured materials together.

Give yourself a schedule within which to do this new work. Consider setting yourself a maximum of three specific tasks or parts of the mini-project to explore and test. Make sure you think about the resources you’ll need to access in order to carry out your mini-project.

Try not to have preconceived ideas about the exact work you’ll produce before you’ve even started, otherwise what’s the point of carrying out the project? You may wish to set yourself some questions to explore as a way of keeping you focused. If you already know precisely what you’ll produce, then the likelihood is that you won’t allow room for innovative and unexpected results or new learning to happen. Begin by following your mini-project plan, but if something exciting happens, allow yourself to build your work from it. Don’t feel restricted by your proposal; treat it as a launch pad or general guide for this short project.
Connect and communicate

Part One concludes by asking you to develop a way to show the connections in your work and to communicate them in a pared-down and controlled way. You’ll focus on finding and utilising a digital format for presenting the work from your mini-project in an inspiring, intriguing, succinct and connected way.

Making connections, and being able to communicate connections between different pieces of work and different elements of work, is an important skill to develop. This helps you to build a narrative, helps to communicate your work in a fluid way and also helps to make your work more accessible and intriguing.

Your format for this project can be a pdf, PowerPoint, InDesign book, website, standalone blog, video or any other digital format you feel is applicable. You may need to invest some time in trying out different digital formats in order to find the best one for your work. If you’re not particularly experienced in this area, this is a good opportunity to familiarise yourself with the digital world as digital presentation is now a hugely important aspect of creative work, from online exhibitions to work submissions, digital folios and CVs, job applications or simply sending examples of your practice via email.

Focus on communicating the most relevant new work you’ve done in the mini-project, and those pieces that you feel might serve as a springboard for your personal project. Be sure to record your process of trying out ideas in your learning log; this will help you review the work, develop your thinking and demonstrate reflection and a self-critical approach.
Project 1.5 Connect and communicate

Firstly, extract and identify examples or aspects of your new work, or processes or angles on the new work you’ve just created, that you feel give a sense of where your personal project may head. This may change later in the course, but you should be beginning to evaluate your work with the future in mind.

Select and edit down to just 10 images/samples/pieces of work and a maximum of just one word per piece to capture or introduce or suggest something about each of the 10 selections.

Bear in mind that you’ll use these 10 pieces and words to construct an ordered book or sequenced folio that reads coherently from start to finish.

You’ll need to consider what you want this book to communicate to an audience or viewer. There should be something to connect one image and word to the next image and word. You’re likely to find that your initial selection doesn’t immediately or easily connect together in a sequence. If this is the case, there are a number of ways you can tackle the task. The words you employ beside each image (if you decide to include words at all) can be a driving and connecting force. The colour palette you employ may be what connects and unites the work when turning from one page to the next. Think about how a flick book works, where small changes build a story over many, many pages. How can you build your story over just 10 pages?

Visual communication of your work is the focus here. You’ll work through quite a few versions before settling on the final version. Make sure you record these different options, as they form the development and refinement process of the project and will demonstrate your thinking and approaches.

Think about whether you need to create new pieces of work to link the more disparate pieces. For example, you may have five pieces of work that connect and read very well in sequence, but need to grow this sequence to 10 through newly created pieces to complete the story.

Once you’ve developed and finalised the content of your 10-page book or folio, you’ll need to organise the digital formatting of it. This could be something that you work with from the start, or you may decide to wait and capture the ‘real’ work into a digital version at the end. It’s your decision how you do this. Take care with photography, scanning, video or any other means you choose for capturing the new work. Good photography will only enhance your work, so make sure you pay as much attention to this stage as you have to the initial creation of your sequenced book or folio.

Submit this work digitally to your tutor.
Assignment one

Please send to your tutor:

- Examples of the work you did for the exercises in Project 1.1. These examples should provide clear evidence of your research, review, selection, editing and engagement processes.
- Your folios for Projects 1.2 to 1.5. Project 1.5 should be submitted digitally.
- A representative sample of your learning log, sketchbook and development work, including plans and schedules you’ve prepared to self-direct and manage exercises and projects throughout your work.

Reflection

Check your work against the assessment criteria listed in the introduction to this course guide before you send it to your tutor and make some notes in your learning log about how well you believe your work meets each criterion.

Your tutor may take a while to get back to you so carry on with the course while you’re waiting.

Reworking your assignment

Following feedback from your tutor, you may wish to rework some of your assignment. If you do this, make sure you reflect on what you’ve done and why in your learning log as this will demonstrate responsiveness and learning to the course assessors.