Written Response IV

(Unit 1 Brief 4: Methods of Iterating)

Runlan (Cecilia) Lin

Draft 1

I chose Weaving as my medium for exploring objects because it provides a way to create planes between frames.

The project I chose is Branch Weavings from Kaci Smith.In this project, branches are used as frames and weaving shows us the planar relationships between branches that are not visible in reality.

In remaking this project, I documented my feelings:

1. During the remake, I was very concerned that the weaving would break the fragile branches, which I think is an uncertainty that comes with the material.

2. Weaving requires a frame, and a frame can be any shape. When the branch serves as a frame, its natural growth pattern ‘dictates’ the direction of the weaving.

3. The weaving seems to transform the 3D branch into a fragmented object made up of several flat surfaces that fit together.

Based on my feelings, I raised three questions:

1. What other materials can be combined with the tightness of the thread and the stability of the weave to produce a different feeling?

2. Is what weaving creates (or fills) a pattern, a plane, or a new space?

3. Is it possible to change the visual form of an object through weaving, or to go further and create a connection between objects?

By remaking this project, I understand why Kaci Smith would call her creative process a way of seeking inner peace or meditation. It is an emotional expression of direct contact with matter and materials. Sometimes weaving is given too much of a practical function, so I am looking forward to creating something ‘useless’ in this medium.

Draft 2

From Fragments to Systems: Driving Creation Through Constant Questioning

Last week, I raised three questions. The one I am most intrigued by is:

Is what weaving creates (or fills) a pattern, a plane, or a new space?

This was a spontaneous question, arising from my interest in the negative space of branches while learning to weave and remaking the artist's work. When this idea surfaced, my instinctive thought was: I could replace the woven pattern with the gray-and-white checkerboard pattern representing "transparency" in Photoshop since this also represents an intriguing negative space!

However, I didn't realize these thoughts were fragmented. I hadn't established a system to connect them cohesively, even though I might have subconsciously sensed their potential interrelation. So I started to reconsider my approach, influenced significantly by my reading of the *Conditional Design Manifesto*. "The process is the product." (Maurer et al, 2013, p. ii).The process of generating ideas might be more crucial than reaching a "definitive" conclusion. So, in the context of critical design, what is the process? For me, the creative process is a series of ongoing questions.

I began rethinking:

1. Why am I interested in the negative space of objects?
2. What new interpretations does the medium of weaving bring to negative space?
3. Why choose to represent negative space using Photoshop's transparency pattern?
4. Why translate digital images (patterns) into physical reality?

As I explored these questions one by one, I realized my goal wasn't to find a "correct" answer but to guide myself in combining the previously scattered fragments (weaving, negative space, and digital images). This is logic, "which we use to design the conditions through which the process can take place"(Maurer et al, 2013, p. ii). Perhaps our questions form the necessary path in critical design to generate "conditions",which, in turn, "sharpen the perspective on the process and stimulate play"(Maurer et al, 2013, p. ii). For instance, through reflecting on the four questions above, I discovered a commonality between the woven negative space and Photoshop's transparent layers: they both represent an editable space. This shared trait allowed me to further advance the creative process. Does this mean that by identifying commonalities while setting conditions, we can establish a system through connecting these commonalities?

I also believe that designers are more like selectors rather than creators. Personally, I agree that what appears to be an objective process actually stems from subjective feelings or intentions. When faced with the same problem, different designers can ask questions, make choices, and set conditions or rules based on their subjectivity, leading them to their own systems.

I finally understand the meaning behind viewing the process as a kind of program, a way to generate more possibilities and a more systematic approach(Blauvelt, 2013, p. iv). The artwork itself will no longer be a closed conclusion but rather a system that can continue to evolve. Its inherent iterative nature will further inspire viewers' interpretations, which will, in turn, influence the meaning of the system.

A smaller reflection:

Aren't fragments themselves a system?

Initially, I thought weaving, negative space, and digital images were disjointed fragments within the work's system. But as I defined them, I realized they each had rich potential for exploration. So why not view each as a small system in itself?

Perhaps the process of creating a work is about continuously enriching the connections within systems. As described in *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*, much like "the object which is transformed by association with a new idea"(Jencks and Silver, 2013, p. 41), systems are the same. This also complements the idea mentioned earlier—establishing a system by connecting commonalities.

Honestly, this creative process made me feel a bit anxious since stepping back to a previous stage and re-questioning myself during iterations is challenging for me. But I'm grateful for having gone through this reflective process. After all, "the process is the product". This seems more valuable than a definite outcome.

* Draft 2 is a summary of the reflections from Week 2 and Week 3.

Reference

Blauvelt, A., Maurer, L., Paulus, E., Puckey, J., Wouters, R. (2013) *Conditional Design Workbook*. Amsterdam: Valiz, pp. ii–xiv.

Jencks, C. and Silver, N. (2013) *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp.38–53.

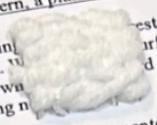
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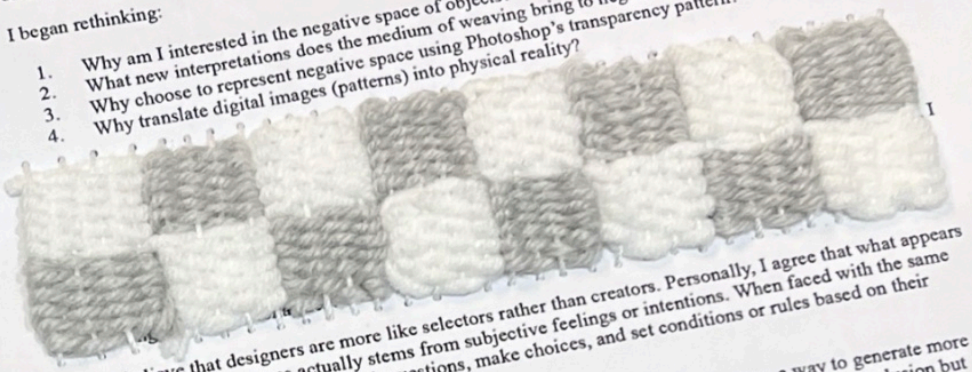


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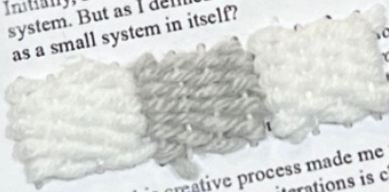


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Weaving on text represents the areas where the text exists as an editable space.