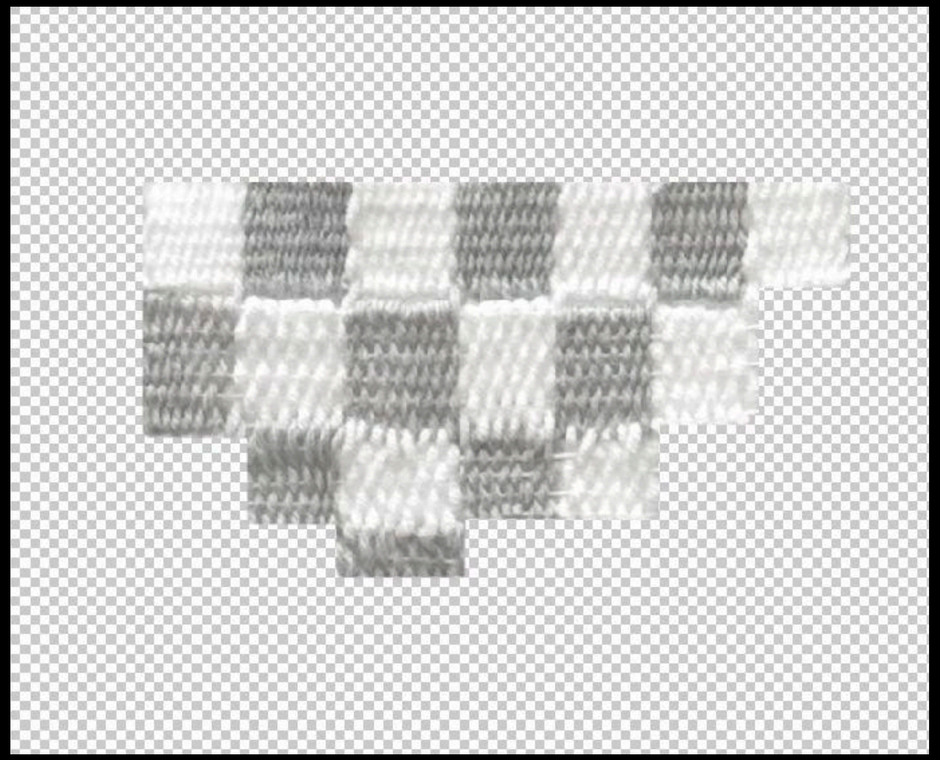
Methods of Iterating

TOOL OR MEDIUM: Weaving

Weaving is given too many useful functions,
but I want to make it less useful for a while.



Final Presentation

04. Feb. 2025





Kaci Smith: Branch Weavings

Smith had previously turned to the craft as a calming and meditative complement to her collage and painting practice, so when she began to forage for twigs that she could transform into delicate looms, she was excited about the possibilities and a new challenge.

Weaving colorful weft threads through plain warp threads, Smith's interventions suspend web-like miniature tapestries in natural frames. Depending on the size of the branch or the complexity of the pattern, a piece can take several days to complete."Even though tapestry is basically 'painting with yarn,' you can never rush it. The very nature of it teaches patience, and there is a special rhythm in the repetition."





Remake





I chose weaving as my medium. After recreating the artist's work in the first week, I raised three questions, with the most intriguing one being:

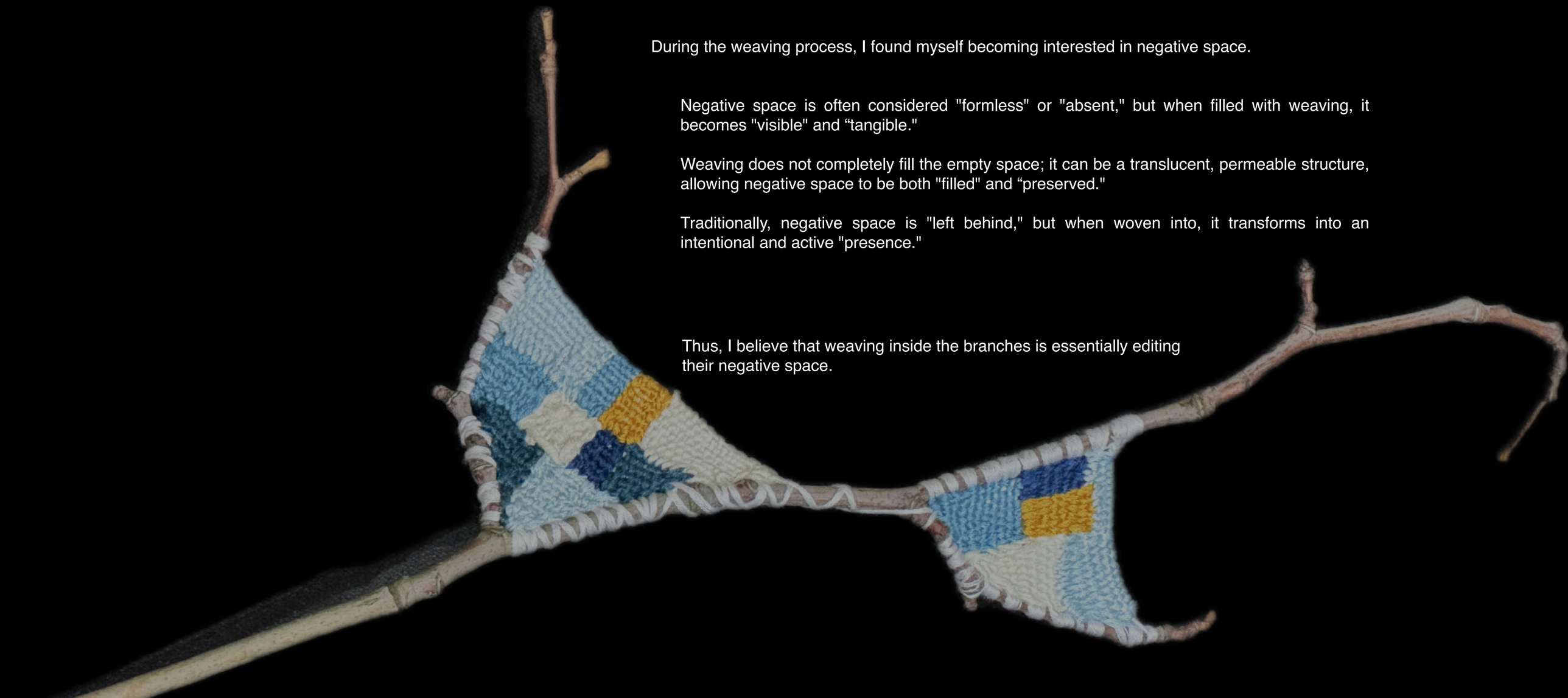
1 What other materials can be combined with the tightness of the thread and the stability of the weave to produce a different feeling?

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?

The one I am most interested in is:

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



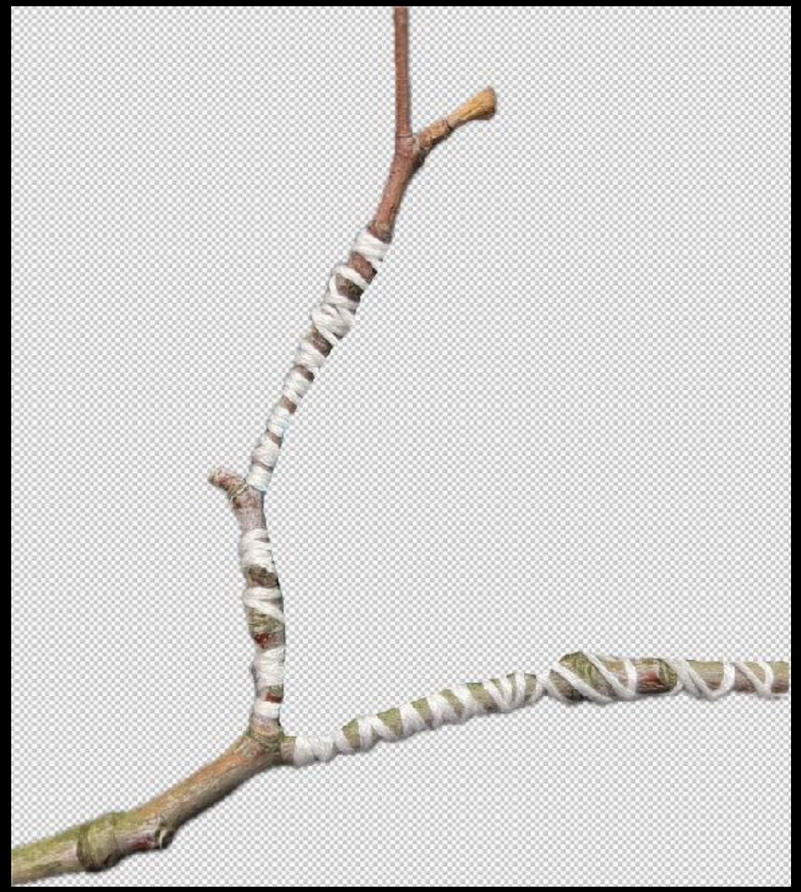
During the weaving process, I found myself becoming interested in negative space.

Negative space is often considered "formless" or "absent," but when filled with weaving, it becomes "visible" and “tangible."

Weaving does not completely fill the empty space; it can be a translucent, permeable structure, allowing negative space to be both "filled" and “preserved."

Traditionally, negative space is "left behind," but when woven into, it transforms into an intentional and active "presence."

Thus, I believe that weaving inside the branches is essentially editing their negative space.





I noticed that the woven square patterns somewhat resembled a checkerboard. At the same time, when I placed the completed branch PNG image into Photoshop, I discovered something interesting: on the left side, both the inside and outside of the branch were surrounded by a gray-and-white checkerboard pattern. However, the inside of the woven branch had been filled in, replacing the transparent background.

This led me to reconsider the definition of Photoshop’s transparent layer pattern.

It is a functional visual language, existing to remind users that "there is nothing here." It is the most intuitive representation of negative space in the digital world—a visible void. It explicitly conveys a state of "yet to be filled, ready to be replaced." In reality, negative space is not usually so clearly marked, but Photoshop makes us aware that "emptiness" itself holds meaning.

This suggests that Photoshop’s transparent background represents an editable space. If we bring this pattern into the real world and use weaving to fill real negative space, does that mean the blank areas of reality also become "waiting to be filled"? Is reality, like Photoshop, something that can be freely edited?

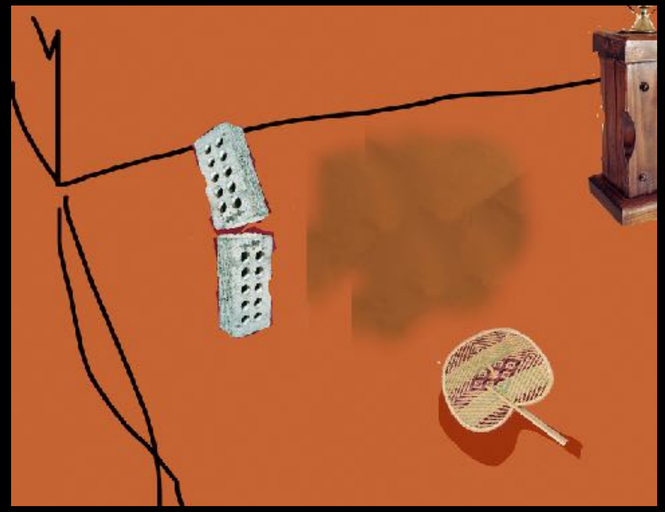


At first, I was simply filling the negative space of a branch. But now, this experiment has led me to rethink: is negative space truly "empty," or does it inherently hold meaning, waiting to become something? Is space in the real world as fluid and malleable as it is in Photoshop?

With this question in mind, I began using weaving to simulate Photoshop's transparent background pattern. By embedding it into the negative spaces of real-world objects, I aimed to create a true intersection between digital logic and physical reality.



blue bottles



goodid



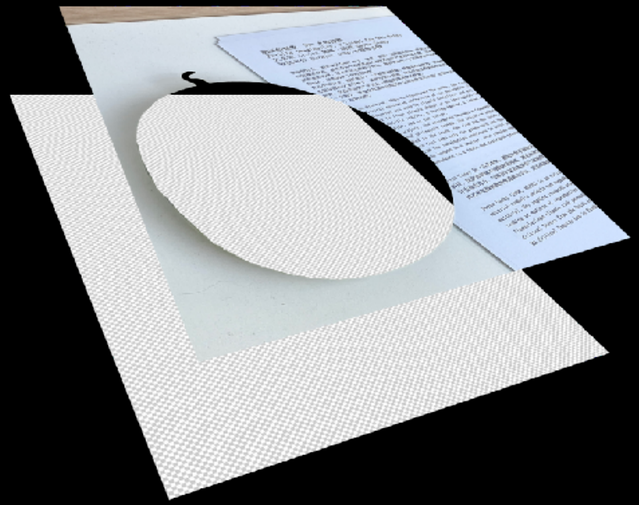
two lettuces

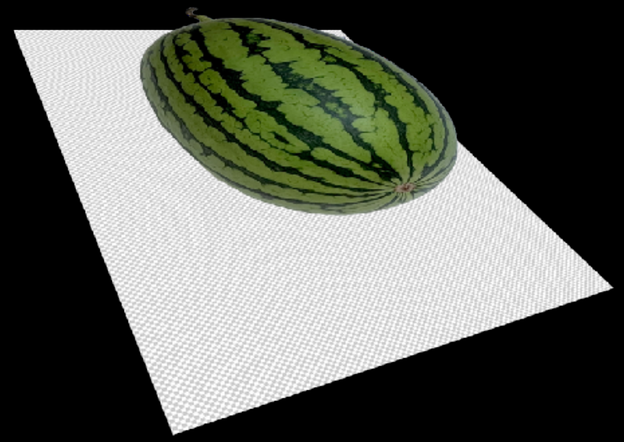
Lucas Blalock

After completing a series of woven objects, I wanted a more engaging way to present them. This reminded me of Lucas Blalock's work—his still-life photography deliberately leaves obvious traces of Photoshop manipulation, such as incorrect selections and rough cutouts, making the real world appear like an incomplete digital image. His work explores how reality is influenced by digital editing, making it seem like an "unfinished, editable file."

Inspired by this, I wanted to see if I could convert real-world objects into images and then "edit" the objects within those images. My initial idea was to hollow out parts of an image and replace them with woven, transparent layers—an attempt to translate the concept of layers into real life.

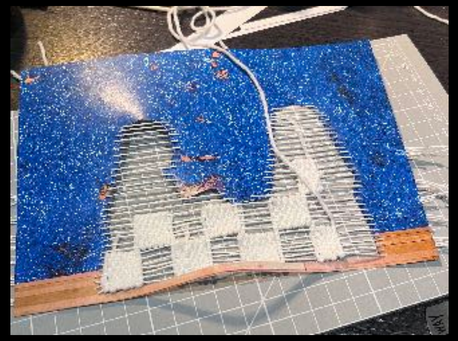


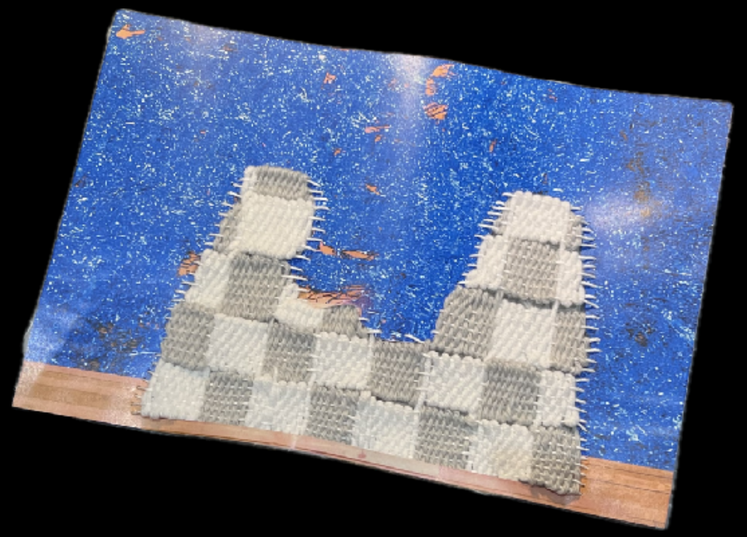




However, I found that this approach didn't fully showcase the uniqueness of weaving. A printed transparent image might better convey my ideas. This made me reconsider what aspects of the weaving process cannot be replicated by flat images. One key difference is the emotional flow within the process itself. Instead of choosing random everyday objects, I decided to work with images carrying deeper emotional significance.







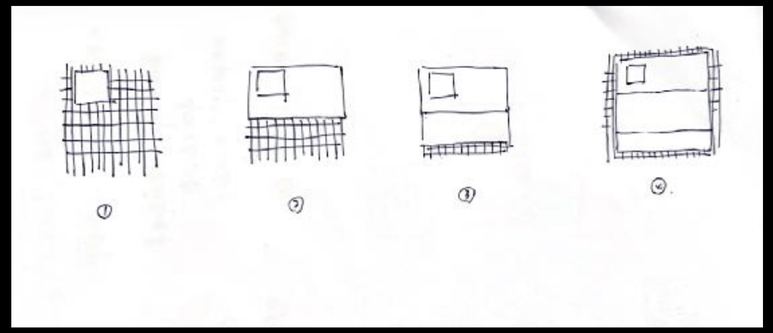


So, I chose photos of me and my friends. We used to be inseparable in daily life, but due to distance, our physical relationship has changed significantly. Weaving into these images represents the interplay between stability and change.

Through the fusion of weaving and the "concept of the digital world" (Photoshop's transparent background), I aim to explore the relationships between reality and virtuality, permanence and transformation. It prompts a reconsideration: is the "blank space" we perceive truly empty, or does it have an invisible function and meaning of its own?

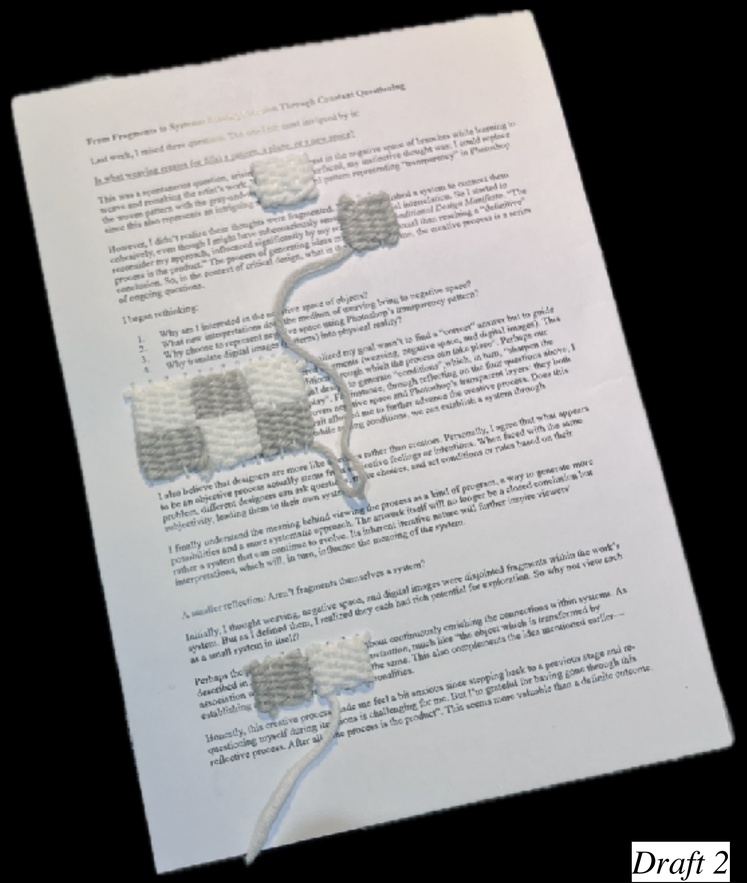


Sara Cwynar : Glass Life



Since weaving takes time, this is as far as I have been able to explore for now. Given more time, I would like to use weaving to investigate the concept of layers in real life. Just as Sara Cwynar reconstructs the concept of physical layers through photography, I also hope to explore the boundaries between reality and the virtual.

I see my weaving experiments as similar to a chimera, continuously integrating different concepts into the weaving technique—such as weaving + negative space, weaving + objects, weaving + images. Through weaving, I can construct more intriguing contexts.



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." 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:

> Why am I interested in the negative space of objects?
> What new interpretations does the medium of weaving bring to negative space?
> Why choose to represent negative space using Photoshop's transparency pattern?
> 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". 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". 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. 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", 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.