

-ABIGAIL ROSE HEDLEY-

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'Processing' frames my most recent creative works. Defined as both the act of coming to terms and accepting the memory of an event and as the act of transforming a material from an unusable state to a refined final object, the term processing encompasses every aspect of my creative practice.

Wool is a shapeless material that is traditionally felted or weaved into submission in the fabrication of utilitarian items. Processed wool is common in fashion and household goods manufacturing, but its unruly raw state makes it difficult to utilize as a building material. Embracing this defiant nature in my practice, my time is committed to the laborious task of needle felting the raw medium, processing, compressing, and intertwining the fibers into a recognizable form.

Every piece begins with spontaneous whim, but not an arbitrary one. Choosing to faithfully recreate a complex form that feels connected to an unidentified, potentially unresolved memory. The act of recreating an object, gesture or bodily form allows an avenue for the subconscious and conscious memory to collide. This exploration can only be achieved during this time of processing the material, where a beginning state of curiosity of an object develops and changes as time is consumed. Allowing the subconscious to make impulsive decisions in the form's fabrication process, inevitably revealing a previously unperceived layer of a memory. Something that was once an unarticulated memory is now a realized tangible object that will act as an event's visual identifier.

The research that informs my work is dual focused in both psychology and most recently the history of the material I primarily use, wool. Researching the history of wool production has deepened my connection with the material and has begun to influence and inform my upcoming works. Wool is a useful byproduct of raising sheep, but processing the material is a timely secondary production. Unable to take that time, wool can become a waste material thrown into compost, burned, or used as an insulating material. In order to better understand this material production, I've taken the steps to research the history of sheep raising and most recently I've begun working with local farms in aiding in the sheep shearing process. This connection between farmer and animal feels like a potential avenue for upcoming works as it discusses both the symbiotic relationship that exists between the two and psychology of the generational farm communities that prioritize sheep production.