

# cover

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Photo: Philip Masael

01

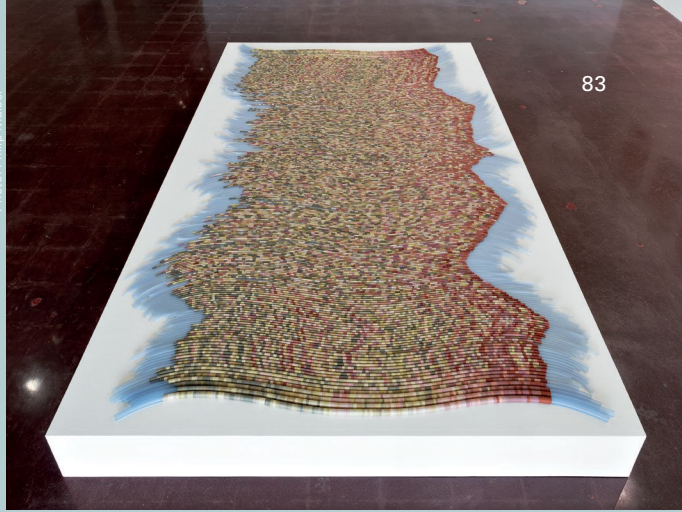


Photo: Philip Masael

02



Photo: Philip Masael

03



Photo: Miranda Brandon

04

# The telling of a crisis

Over the last few years, the term 'climate crisis' has become a part of our everyday lives. **Denna Jones** looks at the textiles of artists and crafters whose work represents the climate facts

**B**itter winters, suffocating summers, dry bed lakes, rising sea levels, increasing storms and their ferocity, and loss of animal and human habitat; all are on the rise as earth rebels against humanity. Can citizen action change this? Can data art alter our behaviour?

Artists and crafters are exploring data visualisation—the translation of numerical data into easy-to-visualise graphics—as a way to communicate climate change. Knitters inspired by The Tempesty Project create scarves with colour gradations to indicate temperature fluctuations, while multidisciplinary artist Tali Weinberg balances the climate data in her weavings with personal and political reflections on the climate crisis.

The popularity of data visualisation escalated after publication of *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (1983) by Edward R. Tufte. A proponent of cognitive art—art that provides valuable insights by translating data into 'data art'—Tufte's system inspired global adherents. Tali Weinberg and The Tempesty Project both use temperature data from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which has recorded global temperatures since 1880. Each project shares similarities, but the visual and conceptual outcomes differ.

**01, 02** (*Bound 1.5*), Tali Weinberg, 2019. Exhibition: 'Beyond Measure' at Lewis Project Space, Tulsa, OK

**03** *Fault Lines*, Tali Weinberg, 2019

**04** *Fractures*, Tali Weinberg, 2018

Photo: Stephanie Panlasigui



05 The National Parks Tempestry Project at Point Reyes National Seashore. Crafter: Laura. The knitted climate data illustrates 1966 on the left, 2016 on the right

05

Tali Weinberg's Woven Climate Datascape Project records climate data as woven and coiled textile pieces that include personal and political relationships to landscape and place. Weinberg's project began in 2015 as an artistic investigation into climate crisis. NOAA climate data informs her process, but her goal is not data visualisation per se, but is instead a synthesis of knowledge and experience that balances earth and body. Her regard for earth is reflected in her materials choices. Weinberg uses raw dye materials from Maiwa on Granville Island, Vancouver and from Botanical Colors in Seattle. For the Datascape she uses weld, Osage orange, madder root, cochineal, pomegranate and myrobalan, with alum as a mordant and scant iron as an after-mordant. The yarns are mainly naturally coloured Foxfibre® organic cotton and wool made by Sally Fox in northern California.

Weinberg uses three main techniques to express data and concepts. She weaves most of her Datascape on an eight-harness Macomber floor loom. She coiled fibre as weft around medical tube warp for *Bound* (2017-19), which used three hundred NOAA data sets to create a reconfigurable installation. Fifteen hundred feet of thread-wrapped medical tubing materialises annual average temperature data for three hundred global locations. Each tube represents geographic scale. Thread colours represent temperature fluctuation.

Weinberg also leads 'Sensing Climate' workshops. At The Unstable Design Lab, ATLAS Institute, University of Colorado at Boulder, the lab's Norwegian TC2 jacquard loom—computer-

controlled but manually operated by the designer-weaver—allowed Weinberg to guide students through a simplified version of her data weaving process as they coded climate data and their climate grief emotions into woven jacquard outcome.

Data art graphics become twice as effective when oppositional data is twinned as 'then and now'. The Tempestry Project (founded 2017) grew out of a fear that climate change data might be purged from US government databases as a result of presidential support for climate change denial. Justin Connelly, Marissa Connelly, and Emily McNeill conceived the idea and assembled kits so people could knit scarves that document annual temperature changes using NOAA data. Hot colours—yellows, oranges, reds—represent heat. Cool colours—greens and blues—represent temperate and cold. Each colour shade is a 5°F data interval. The National Parks Tempestry Project organised by Erika Zambello recruited volunteers to knit scarf pairs that recorded the temperature in National Parks for 2016 and 1916 (the Point Reyes National Seashore data set is 2016 and 1966). The scarf pairs create a stark side-by-side comparison tool.

Black mourning clothes were once commonly worn as an expression of sorrow for someone who died. In our anthropogenic era—defined as human activity that causes environmental damage—it's time we cloaked ourselves in climate change colours as a visual sign to governments and corporations that we will no longer accept climate change inaction.

[www.taliweinberg.com](http://www.taliweinberg.com)

[www.tempestryproject.com](http://www.tempestryproject.com)