

The Human Touch: Daisy May Collingridgeâ??s Wearable Art

Description



â??A tower of two menâ?? Burt and Clive, 2018, Daisy Collingridge

London based artist Daisy May Collingridgeâ??s eccentric, intricately layered â??squishy sculpturesâ?? break down the boundaries between fashion, costume and art in the most playful and humorous ways. She works with soft jersey, hand-dyed into delicate flesh tones to mime the delicate, shifting hues of human skin. These are stitched together in layer upon layer of crease and fold to create wonderfully lumpy and bumpy wearable bodysuits, each with their own unique, characterful properties that celebrate the tactile nature of the human body. We catch up with Collingridge to learn more about the ideas and influences behind her fabric-based practice.

RL: You began your creative career in fashion design â?? what made you switch to making art?

DC: I did a fashion design degree at Central Saint Martins [graduating in 2014}. I love handling fabric, working with the body and responding to movement. However, I never really saw how I fit into the fashion industry. From my perspective, it seemed like the more successful you were in the fashion industry, the less you got to physically make things. I love making with my hands, thatâ??s where I find my joy.



Daisy Collingridge

RL: Having had this experience of both industries, do you see parallels between them?

DC: Fashion at its creative core is ultimately a study of the body. The body as a form to build upon, the body as a social entity, the body in motion. I am still looking and responding to these ideas so in that respect there are strong parallels.

RL: Who are your greatest influences?

DC: Mum. She is a pragmatic and prolific maker. She has turned her hand to all the crafts. She taught me how to sew aged five and both my parents encouraged me to make, draw, paint; and be free. They both still play a big role in my work now.

Other influences are the anatomical illustrations of the 16th century, for example Andreas Vesaliusâ?? book *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1514-64) and that infamous *Body World* exhibition by Gunther von Hagens. It showed the human (and other animals) in all their biological, anatomical glory preserved by plastination.



â??Lean on meâ??, (Burt and Hillary), 2021, Daisy Collingridge

RL: Do you have a preference for certain textures and colours?

DC: Colour is a key aspect to the harmony of the final piece. I dye all the fabric myself so I have control over the palette. The soft colours, are reminiscent of my childhood, they are inviting and evoke comfort and familiarity. Similarly, the wearable pieces and sculptures are all soft to touch. Fabric is inherently tactile so the work takes on that characteristic. The viewer is drawn in with a curiosity to touch. The stretch jersey allows me to sculpture smooth rounded shapes as well as responding to movement when weight is added. It is skin-like.



â??Yoga Sundayâ?? (Clive) 2018, Daisy Collingridge

RL: What is your working process? Do you have a plan in mind before you begin? How long does it take to complete a bodysuit?

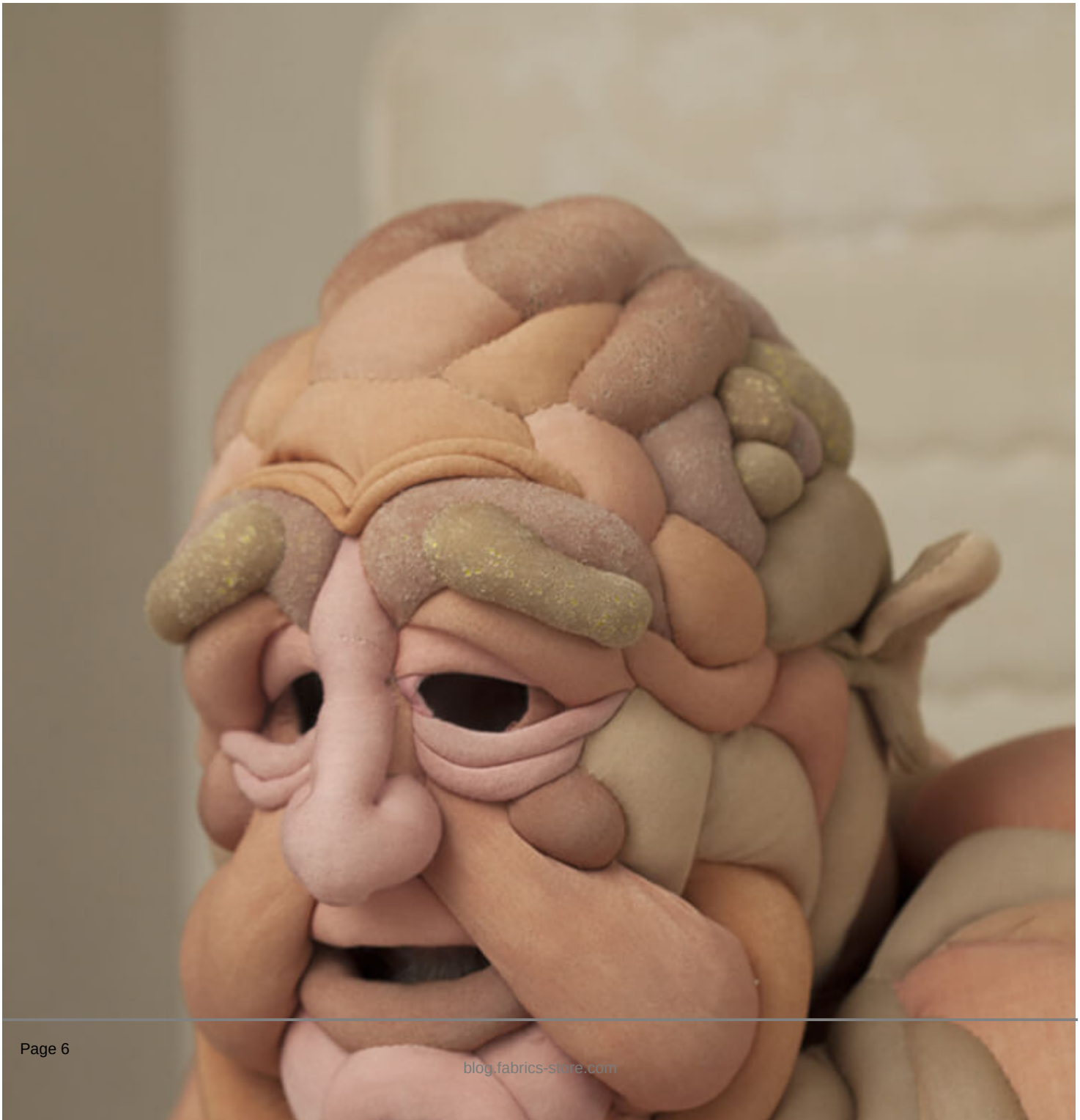
DC: Itâ??s a pretty impulsive process. I make the head first and the body grows from there. There are elements of planning; I decide on a colour palette and dye all the fabric prior to construction but when I begin the sculptural side I work in a spontaneous way. Referencing anatomy books throughout as well as physically wearing elements to study how they respond to movement. Each piece is one of a kind and cannot be re-made the same. It is labour-intensive; they take months to make. Except for the underlying garment structure, the whole piece is hand sewn. They are constructed in sections, head piece, hands, feet, trousers/legs and body sections. The shapes are then built up using layers of wadding and jersey. Each piece is painstakingly hand stitched on. I donâ??t work from drawings, more let the character build itself.



The horse 34, Daisy Collingridge

RL: How many different characters do you have? And how do you come up with their names?

DC: There are five wearable pieces and quite a few more sculptures of varying scales. Each one has its own name, not title. I like to give them names to identify them as individuals. I sometimes work in the animation world and I love breathing life into things.



Daisy Collingridge

RL: What are you currently working on?

DC: I am currently working on my first solo show in October 2023 at TJ Boulting Gallery in London. Itâ??s exciting and scary! Before that I am thrilled to be part of *Within & Without*; a show curated by Ferren Gipson (author of the book *Womenâ??s Work* (2022)) highlighting contemporary women artists working in textiles and ceramics. The exhibition will be at Unit Gallery, London during Womenâ??s History Month (7th Marchâ?? 6th April 2023).

CATEGORY

1. WOMEN IN ART

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