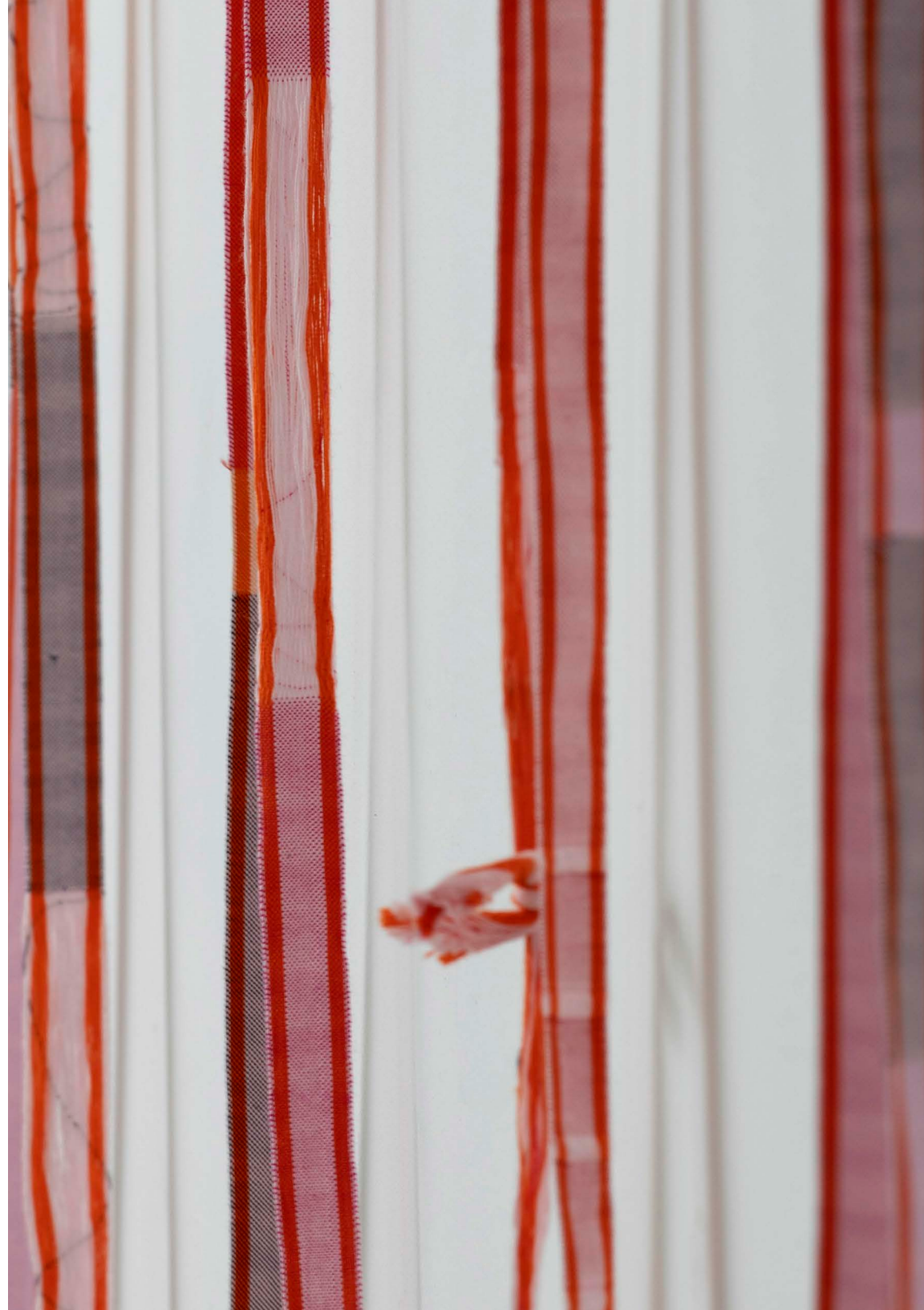


CAMPLE—LINE

**KATIE SCHWAB
THE WARP AND
WOOF OF MY SELF
27.06 – 06.09.26**

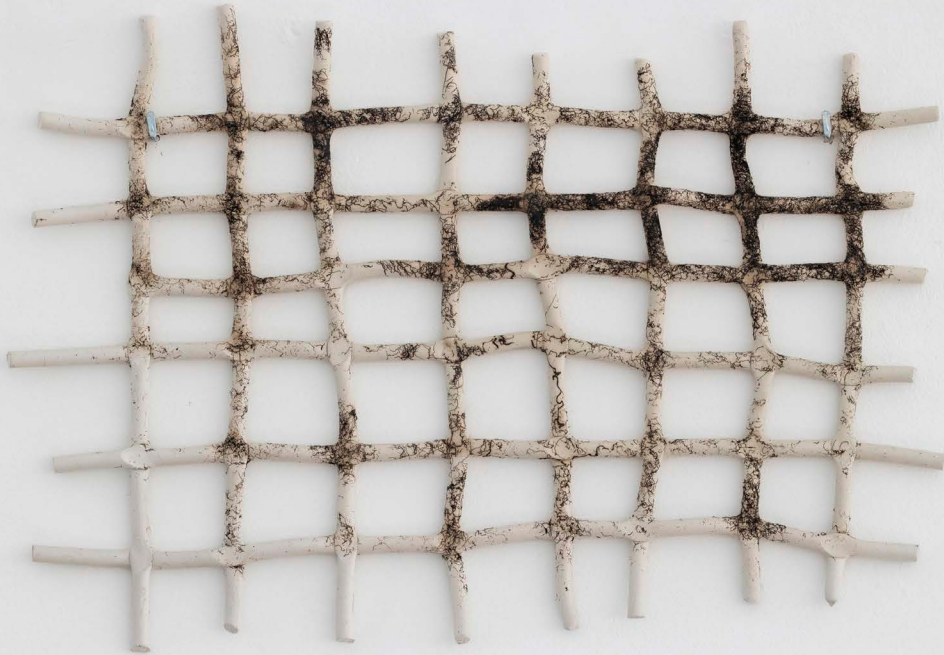




Katie Schwab: *The warp and woof of my self*
—Isabella Smith

There is a kind of unassuming alchemy that lies behind much of craft as it existed in history. Odd fabric scraps accumulated so a quilt was made, or a rag rug, or dolls' clothes: a workaday transmutation of one thing to another in response to specific circumstances. Katie Schwab does something similar in our contemporary context, yet at a slant. Her exhibition at CAMPLE LINE comprises six new and recent works made in response to particular contexts and craft traditions. None of these works are exercises in historical authenticity, nor straightforward reprises of established modes of making. Instead, Schwab will often use a process associated with one craft in a form associated with another: a wool blanket inspires a mosaic, for instance, or a ribbon a ceramic sculpture. Something that might be seen as everyday is transformed into something new, something remarkable. The show's title, *The warp and woof of my self*, is taken from a sentence in American artist Anne Truitt's journal, *Daybook*, written between 1974–78 and first published in 1982. In weaving, the warp and the woof are the interlaced threads that together form a fabric; Truitt used the phrase to describe the artful entwining of family life and working life.

For Schwab, histories of making are personal. Her German Jewish grandparents were both involved in textiles – her grandmother studied Textile Design in 1930s Berlin, while her grandfather was apprenticed at the family's hosiery factory in Chemnitz. Following the forcible purchase of the factory by the Nazis, in 1939 her grandfather fled to England, where he met her grandmother, also a refugee, in Leicester. Since the 19th century, Leicester had been a centre for the production of stockings, socks and knitted garments. At CAMPLE LINE, Schwab goes a step further back up the family tree, showing two pit-fired porcelain sculptures that touch – in the literal sense of the word – on another aspect of her family's ties to textiles.



+++ (wool), 2026



Raku firing at SSW, May 2026

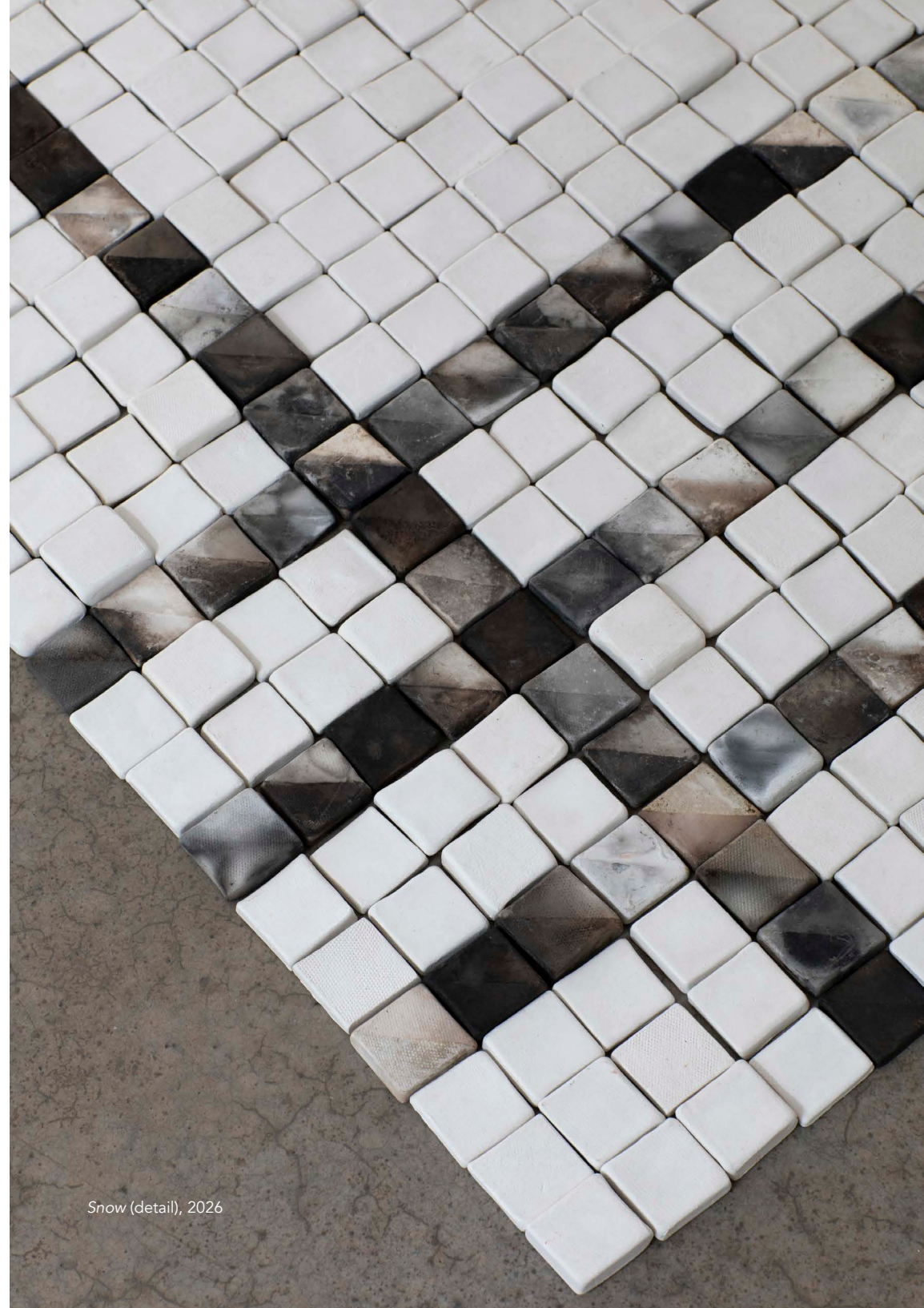
On inheriting her great-grandmother's sewing box, Schwab found trimmings that had lain untouched for over a hundred years. Among them was a spiral of pleated Petersham ribbon, an ammonite-like object coiled in on itself that Schwab has described as a being like 'a fossil, a materially present, physical relic.' She used the ribbon to make a silicone mould, and from that mould cast a series of porcelain pieces titled *&, &*, 2026. During a recent residency at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, Aberdeenshire, she gathered combustible items, such as banana skins, teabags, pinecones and bark, and wrapped them around each porcelain cast. When pit-fired – which is to say nestled together and covered with inflammable materials, then set alight outdoors – the organic matter produced unpredictable smoky effects on the ceramic surface.

Ceramic is the oldest human-made material, its invention dating back at least 29,000 years to the Palaeolithic period. And of this most ancient craft, the earliest known method for firing is this same technique: pit-firing. In Schwab's hands, a swirl of ribbon – a forgotten ephemeral frippery from the early 20th century – becomes a kind of archeological artefact of the present. In its new material guise, it could endure for tens of millennia. Appropriately, given the ribbon's origin, the work was first shown in *Relative Ties*:

Mabel Nicholson, Nancy Nicholson, EQ Nicholson and Louisa Creed
at the Women's Art Collection, Cambridge: an exhibition focused on
artistic inheritances among women from one family.

Schwab returned to the pit-firing technique for a new work, *Snow*, 2026, which responds to the material, social and economic histories of Cample Mill. The hamlet of Cample has been a site of rural industry since at least the 1500s. The wider complex of buildings has been in its time a spinning mill and in the 1840s-90s a woollen mill filled with looms for blanket-making. What is now CAMPLE LINE was at that time part of a row of cottages that housed workers who produced these blankets; the gallery's past can still be felt today in its domestic proportions. Recently, a visitor and descendant of one of the mill's operators showed the gallery team a blanket believed to have been produced by those same workers: a large woollen piece with a linear design of blue stripes of various widths on a cream ground. (A very similar example can be seen in the collection of Dumfries Museum where it is listed as a blanket made at nearby Crawick Mill, suggesting a cross-influence where weavers may have moved between mills.) The visitor's great-great-grandfather had run Cample Mill in the 1870s and 1880s. Schwab took this fragment of local history – a microcosm of the macro story of the rise and decline of light industry on these shores over the past 200 years – as her starting point here.

She did not respond in kind with a textile work. Instead, she continued her experimentation with pit-firing, creating several hundred square ceramic tiles with a variety of surfaces. Learning to control the depth of carbonisation that burning organic matter leaves on the clay allowed for a subtly varied monochrome palette, which echoes that of the locally made blanket. The final result is a mosaic installed on the gallery's floor, which again turns what was once humble, soft, and vulnerable to the passing of time, into something entirely more monumental and enduring. In its gridded form, the work recalls not only the Cample Mill blanket, but Sanquhar patterns: monochrome geometric designs that have been hand-knitted as a cottage industry by inhabitants of the nearby town of Sanquhar since at least the late 1700s. In recent years, to halt the slow loss of knowledge of this tradition, a handful of local residents have recorded these patterns in the grid format of knitting charts – grids like those of Schwab's tiles.



Snow (detail), 2026



Veva van der Wolf working on the braiding machine, TextielLab, Tilburg, 2022

We know about the existence of pottery 29,000 years ago because the nature of fired clay ensured its survival to the present. In *Snow*, a quiet monument to what could be considered mundane, there is a bid for a similar permanence – at least symbolically – for hyperlocal craft. However, Schwab's mosaic is not entirely intact: missing pieces suggest a partial loss – a rent in the fabric of memory.

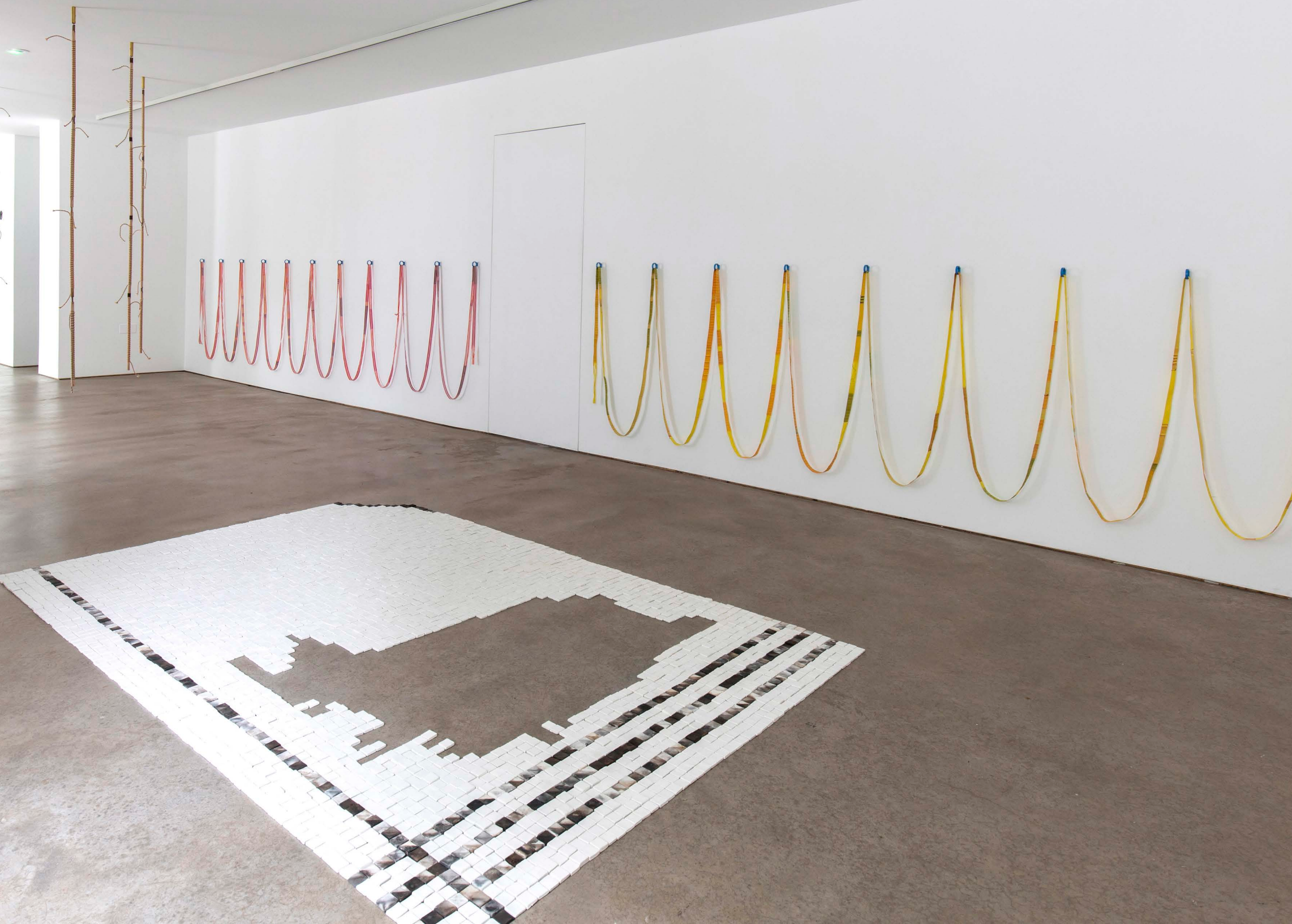
The third work also responds to textile traditions, but this time in kind. In 2021, Schwab was commissioned by Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art in Middelburg in the Netherlands, to make work to be shown in its building in a former meat market. Schwab's response to the place included *small wares & hard wares*, 2021, a work that again slips between traditions and materials, but this time on an architectural scale. 'Small wares' is the trade term for narrow textiles – ribbons, bindings, braids – used to reinforce seams and prevent fabrics from fraying. Research into Middelburg's textile traditions brought the artist to darning samplers (*stoplappen*), cloths on which women and girls as young as eight years old practised stitches for mending, not ornament. Schwab became fascinated by an example from 1766 by Cornelia Smit, now owned by the Historisch Museum De Bevelanden in Goes, which features checked squares and rectangles of darning work in shades of blue, green, yellow, pink and red. The colours and abstract designs of such samplers informed the palette and pattern of *small wares & hard wares*.

Working in collaboration with passementerie expert Veva van der Wolf at the TextielLab, the workshop of the TextielMuseum in Tilburg, three ribbons measuring between 15-20 metres long were woven on a band-weaving loom dating from 1880. Like the samplers, the ribbons incorporate stripes, deliberate holes, and repairs worked in silk, cotton and linen. The pink and orange hues of the warp refer to madder, a plant dye historically cultivated across the region of Zeeland. The ribbons were festooned over scars in the brick walls of Vleeshal in jubilant fashion, a kind of carnivalesque gesture of repair. In *CAMPLE LINE* they find new life in more orderly fashion along two of the gallery walls. Hung at the approximate height of a field fence, they loop down from blue powder coated steel hooks at regular intervals, almost but not quite reaching the floor.

The final work, *Braids*, 2022/6, is a collaborative work with furniture maker Simon Worthington, and hints at a more recent chapter in Cample Mill's history. It began as a commission for Hospitalfield in Arbroath, which is currently undergoing long-term redevelopment with Caruso St John Architects. In 2017, Schwab was invited to design a desk and chair for the new study bedrooms; she brought in Worthington, and together they began developing a design for a Windsor chair using timber from trees felled by storms on Hospitalfields' estate. Working again at the TextielLab, the Windsor chair's ash spindles were wrapped in linen, paper, cotton and wool using a braiding machine, encasing each one in colour. In the 1980s, Cample Mill housed a furniture business that itself produced Windsor chairs. At *CAMPLE LINE*, Schwab has reimagined the wrapped spindles – now threaded together in a colourful vertical line – as hanging sculptures, presenting a new chapter in the life of the ongoing furniture project. These turn slowly, ceaselessly in the air: furniture dreaming of itself.

Isabella Smith is a writer and editor. Her first book, Lucie Rie, was published by Eiderdown Books in 2022; her second is due in Autumn 2027 with Thames & Hudson. Her writing has appeared in The Guardian, The Financial Times, The Observer Magazine and World of Interiors, among others. She was previously senior editor at Apollo magazine.





List of works

1. **Braids**, 2022-6
Katie Schwab and Simon Worthington
Ash, linen, paper, cotton, wool, fumed oak, copper, brass
192 x 1.5 cm

Spindles produced as part of a commission for
Hospitalfield, Arbroath, for their Future Plan Project

2. **Snow**, 2026
Stoneware, pit-fired stoneware
239 x 158 cm

3. **+++ (wool)**, 2026
Raku- fired stoneware
22.3 x 32.5 cm

Snow and *+++ (wool)* were produced as part of SSW x
Counterflows Caregivers Residency 2025-26, with support
from William Grant Foundation and Creative Scotland

4. **small wares & hard wares**, 2021
Cotton, linen, silk, powder coated steel
93 x 363.5 x 25 cm
96 x 362 x 25 cm
96 x 403 x 25 cm

Commissioned by Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art
and supported by Arts Council England

5. **&, &**, 2026
Pit- fired porcelain
10 x 9.5 and 9.5 x 10 cm

Commissioned by The Women's Art Collection,
Cambridge, and supported by the Hope Scott Trust

6. **Sticks**, 2026
Raku- fired stoneware
each 1.4 cm diameter, various lengths

Produced as part of SSW x Counterflows Caregivers
Residency 2025-26, with support from William Grant
Foundation and Creative Scotland

Dimensions are given H x W x D

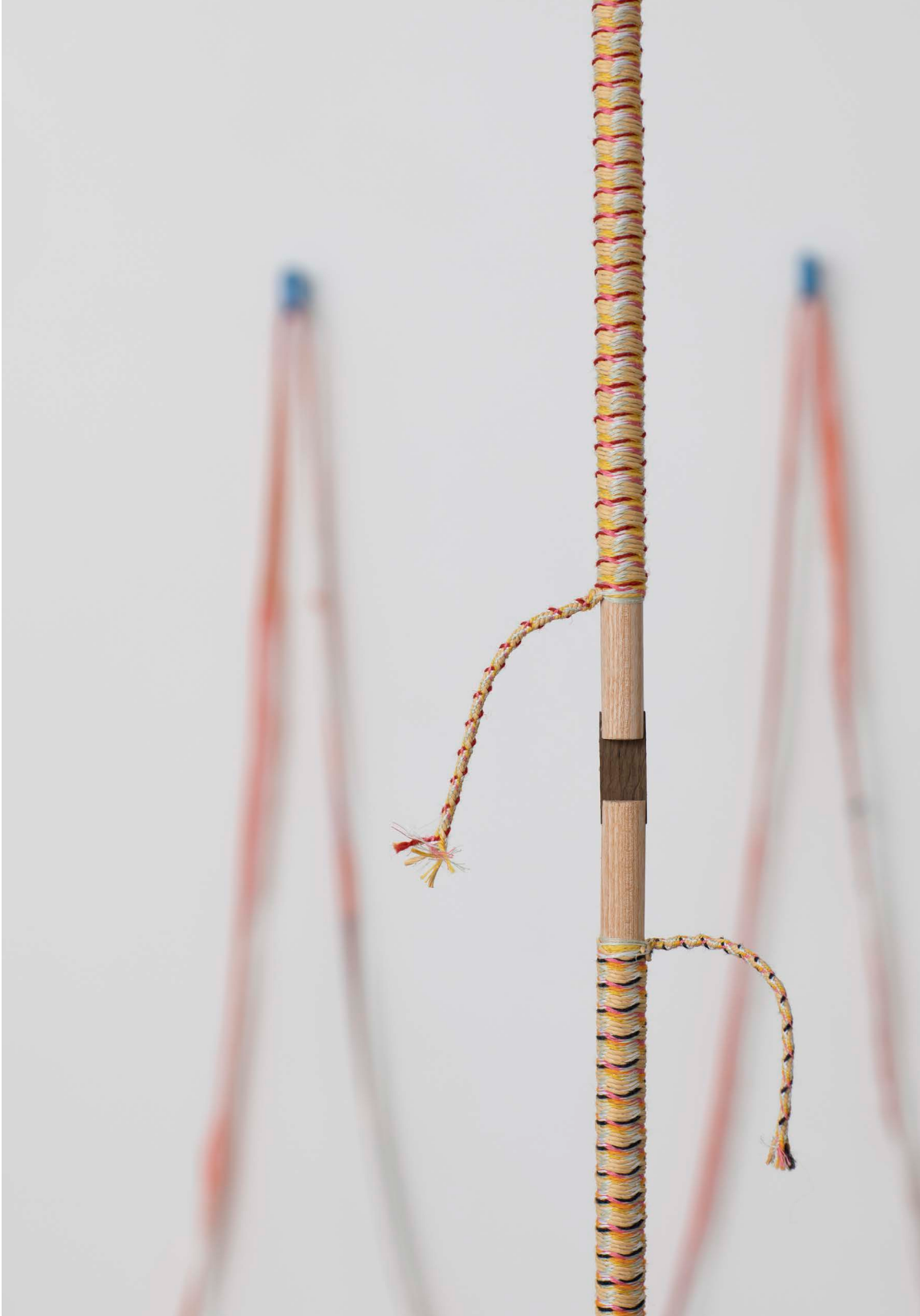
small wares and hard wares (detail), 2021





Katie Schwab (b. Hackney, 1985) is based in Glasgow, and currently teaches at Edinburgh College of Art. She creates sculptures, prints and installations informed by textile processes of stitching, weaving and knitting. Her projects are shaped through research into historic textiles and their social and cultural contexts. Often hand-made and collaborative, her works reflect on forms of material repair and affective transformation

Recent exhibitions include *Relative Ties: Mabel Nicholson, Nancy Nicholson, EQ Nicholson and Louisa Creed* at the Women's Art Collection, Cambridge (2026); *British Art Show 9*, Hayward Gallery Touring (2021-22); *small wares*, Vleeshal, Middelburg, The Netherlands (2021); *Another Crossing, Artists Revisit the Mayflower Voyage*, Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA, USA; *The Box*, Plymouth, UK (2021-22); *A Working Building*, The Gallery at Plymouth College of Art, Plymouth (2019); and *This Interesting and Wonderful Factory*, Clore Sky Studio Commission, Tate St Ives, St Ives (2018).





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