

Marisa Ranalli

Artist Statement

The mixture of textiles and electronic components has always been an interesting combination to me. Textiles are usually regarded as soft materials whereas technology is associated with hard mechanical objects. Using the two types of materials together breaks down boundaries between disciplines, creating new and exciting possibilities for textiles of the future.

My work focuses around biological themes. Nature based creations have textures that lend themselves to be made through cloth, as cloth is very organic itself. I mainly use wools and silks for my work. Textiles can be sculpted into many different natural looking forms through different construction techniques.

Electronic components are heavily associated with internal structure, and I like the idea of placing internal parts, which are normally hidden, on the outside for everyone to see. Exposing the internal structure gives the viewer the ability to learn and understand what is going on inside an object. This is similar to observing translucent deep sea creatures such as jellyfish, or looking through medical books.

My design process reflects my love of inner workings and intricate construction. I create three dimensional forms that require extreme amounts of time and detail to construct. LEDs (light emitting diodes) or glow in the dark pigments can be used to illuminate textiles to make them mimic a bioluminescent (the emission of light from living organisms) creature. Being able to rearrange and interact with the object is also incredibly important to me. Usually, we are restricted from interacting with art pieces for the fear of damaging them, but I feel it is important to be able to feel the textures of different types of fabrics, especially if they react to the viewers' actions.

Currently, there are very few artists working with combining electronics and textiles. I enjoy the challenge of figuring out how to combine these materials and doing research on such a new subject. I have always been interested in technology and I love that I have found a way to contribute to the technological progression of interactive textiles.