WEAVE PARKHEAD: INSPIRATION

The beehive crest on the old Westmuir and Parkhead Economical Society co-operative building at 64 Westmuir Street, became a key motif in the design process of the panels - symbolizing the cooperative spirit of the weavers, and the community spirit of present-day Parkhead.

The beehive crest at 64 Westmuir Street. Although the society was founded in 1831, the building on Westmuir Street was not built until 1915.

From the outset, the team felt it was important that a celebration of the heritage of Parkhead did not mean charting what had been lost, but instead embodied hopes and aspirations for the future. With this in mind, we worked in partnership with several groups supporting local projects, including All In For Parkhead's community garden at Whitby Street and Parkhead Library's children's panel project.

Workshops were designed as creative, hands-on experiences and community members were given the opportunity to input directly to the design process of the panels and contribute to materials for the exhibition.

Maintaining a cohesive look across the four panels has been a major challenge; the panels utilise a diverse range of materials and techniques, and each individual artist has brought their own particular style and process to the work.

To ensure the panels worked as a group as well as individually, the team decided early in the design process to restrict the colour palette to monochromes and a yellow shade (in honour of the bees on the co-operative crest and the community gardens at Whitby Street). The yellow wool yarns, silk threads, and cotton base material were dyed using the leaves of wild Weld plants by dyer Kathy Becket of Colour Ecology during a community 'wild weaving' event in partnership with 'All In for Parkhead'.

The other unifying element can be found in the use of the geometric shapes found in local architecture, industrial buildings and machinery features, and in the use of hexagons, referencing the cellular structure of honeycomb and chemical formulas for carbon (coal).

The materials used to create each panel were selected to reflect the four major themes - Radical Politics, Landscape, Made in Parkhead and People and Place - but also the evolution of textile technologies and styles - from the early days of handloom weaving, through the era of mechanised weaving and into the age of steel manufacturing, for which Parkhead is perhaps most famous.

Find out more about Parkhead's fascinating history

🌐 **www.parkheadhistory.com**

Left image: Row of weavers cottages at 'Shinty Ha', photographed in the early 1900s. The cottages were located to the east of Parkhead Library on Tollcross Road. Handloom weavers worked from home, their looms were set up on the ground floor and the family lived above.

RADICAL PARKHEAD

MATERIALS: WOOL, HAND DYED FROM WELD PLANT

TECHNOLOGY: HANDWOVEN

ARTIST/DESIGNER: ANGHARAD MCLAREN (WEAVER AND TEXTILE DESIGNER)

In 1831, a group of local weavers and miners, led by handloom weaver William Thomson, founded the Parkhead and Westmuir Economical Society, one of the earliest co-operative societies in Britain.

The new society provided support and assistance to local families and allowed them to buy food and provisions at cost price. Thomson went on to found a further 30 co-operatives in Scotland and was a leading light of the early socialist movement. The society built new premises at 64 Westmuir Street, and the society's crest, featuring a beehive, can still be seen there today.

To celebrate the radical, progressive politics of Parkhead's past, a honeycomb weave structure was chosen for this panel, so named, as it resembles the cellular structures found in beehives. Crafted by weaving threads that interlace tighter in some areas than others, varieties in the tension form the architectural peaks and troughs of the cells that create its characteristic three-dimensional quality.

The panel was woven on a traditional, wooden George Wood hand-loom, very similar to the type used in the Parkhead area when hand-weaving was the mainstay of local industry. The yellow coloured wool was hand-dyed by Glasgow-based colour ecologist Kathy Beckett, using locally sourced Broom and Weld plants. The colour gradiates into a black, metallic yarn to represent the development of Parkhead industry towards coal mining, also a natural product from the local land.

LANDSCAPE & GEOLOGY

MATERIALS: COTTON WARP, WOOL WEFT 🌳 + 🐑
TECHNOLOGY: JACQUARD WOVEN BY HUMPHRIES WEAVING 🧹
ARTIST/DESIGNER: SHIELAGH TACEY (WEAVER AND TEXTILE DESIGNER)

Parkhead is easy to find on a map of Glasgow because of the distinctive five-way junction at Parkhead Cross. This ancient cross-roads existed long before the villages of Westmuir and Parkhead, and became a key locating feature of this map-inspired panel. The design merges elements drawn from historic and geological maps, using different textures and weaves to highlight the relationships between the natural and cultural environment of the area.

The repeated yellow hexagonal motif has a double significance. Firstly, it references the molecular structure of carbon, the underlying geology of the area and the miners community which grew up around Westmuir Street. Secondly, it references honeycomb and by extension the beehive crest at
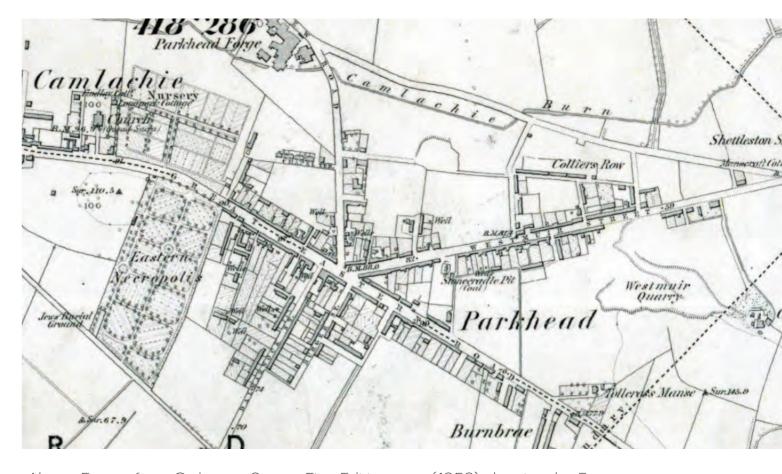
64 Westmuir Street, symbolic not only of the co-operative society once housed there but also the collaborative nature of this project.

The panel is woven in several contrasting, traditional weave structures, including hopsack, herringbone and twills, which would have been familiar to the Parkhead handloom weavers at 'Shinty Ha'. The panel was woven at Humphries Weaving Mill in Suffolk using a mechanised 'jacquard' loom of the kind which replaced traditional hand weaving; thereby recalling the transition from hand weaving to a more industrialised process.
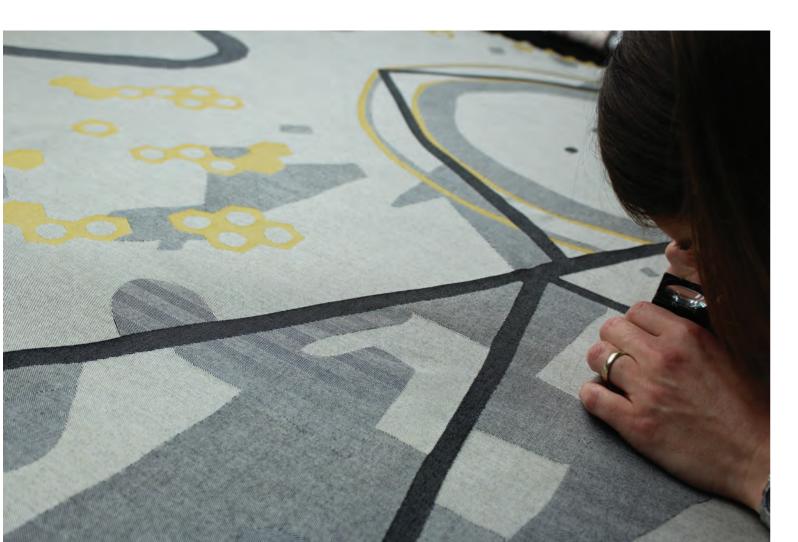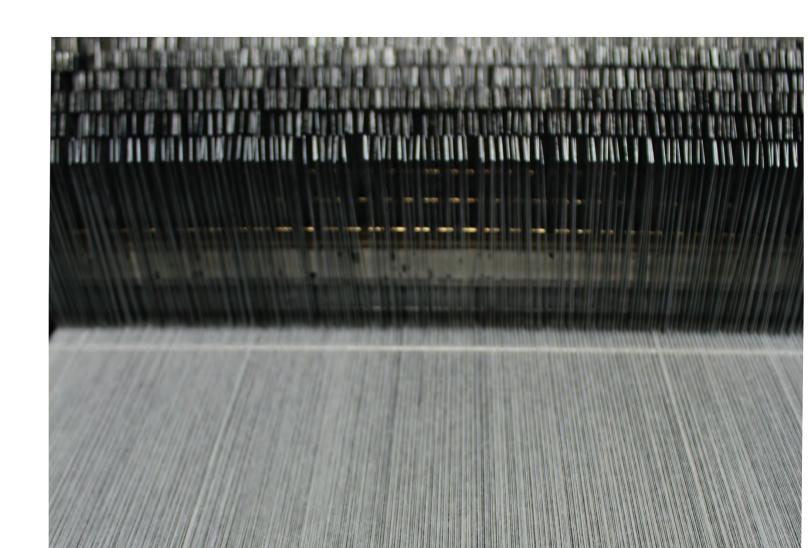
H Special thanks to the team at Humphries Weaving for their help and support (www.humphriesweaving.co.uk)
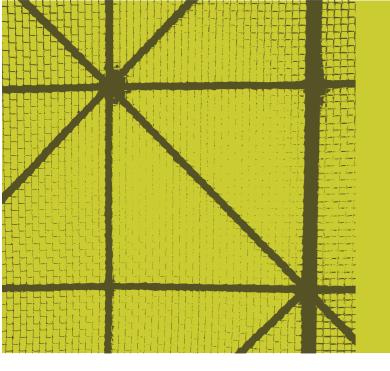

Above: Extract from Ordnance Survey First Edition map (1858), showing the 5-way junction at Parkhead Cross. Other images courtesy of Humphries Weaving, showing the panel in production.

MADE IN PARKHEAD

MATERIALS: WOVEN STEEL BASE, SILK THREAD
TECHNOLOGY: MACHINE WOVEN STEEL AND HAND EMBROIDERY
ARTIST/DESIGNER: LAUREN DAY (EMBROIDERER)

Inspired by the great steam hammers of Beardmore Forge (Samsung, Goliath & Hercules), the design represents the steam hammers' powerful, emblematic silhouette. Other Parkhead industries referenced within the design include; William Arrol's Parkhead Craneworks, Carntyne Ropeworks, and Springfield Wire Works (source of the base materials). The Ropeworks influenced the decision to use a 'chain stitch' - an embroidery technique in which a series of looped stitches form a chain-like pattern. Draughtsman's drawings and the styles of historic advertisements from various local factories led to the graphic, poster-scale and bold, thick lines.

The artist was particularly influenced by the industrial nature of the process of creating the work - in particular the repetitive, methodical, process of stitching through a machine-produced metal grid.
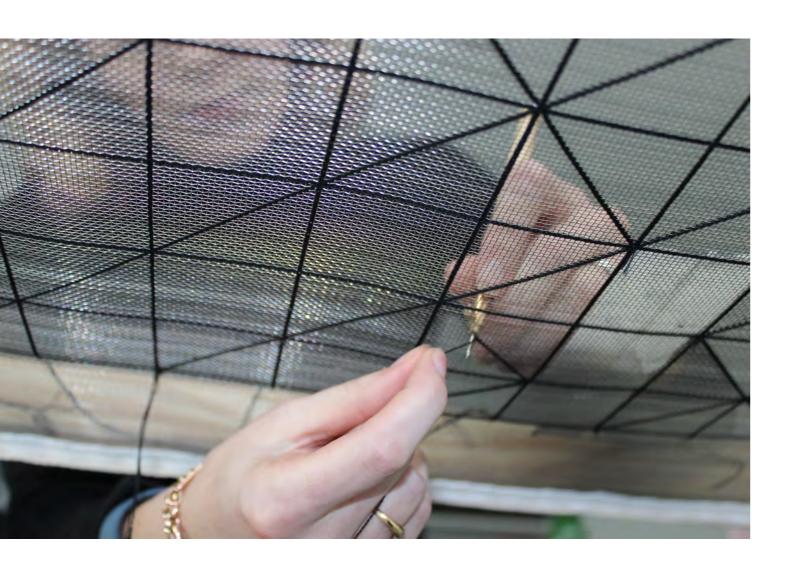
This highly technical approach shines through within this labour intensive panel - there are almost 70,000 stitches within this design, all done by hand!

The use of a chain stitch signifies the link from one industrial procedure to another, and between the people working together to make this possible. The value of the human contribution and connection to Parkhead's industry is emphasized through the time-intensive hand embroidery.
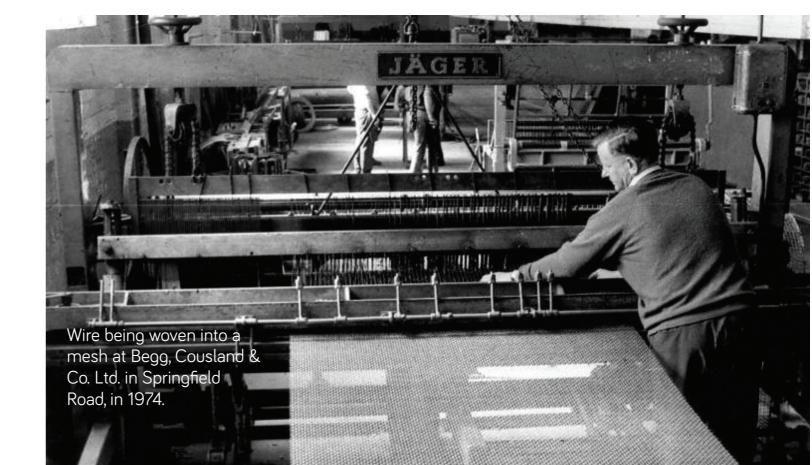
Made in Parkhead

The woven steel base for this panel was kindly donated by Graeme Cousland, MD of Begg Cousland Envirotech Ltd, whose family owned the Springfield Wire Works. The wire is cut from the last roll produced at the factory in Parkhead.

Begg Cousland
World Class Filtration Solutions

HAND EMBROIDERED GRID = 176 TRIANGLES

OUTLINE STITCHES ON FRONT OF GRID
186 STITCHES PER TRIANGLE ⇒ 176 X 186
= 32,736 STITCHES ON FRONT

FILL STITCHES ON BACK OF GRID = 76 TRIANGLES
480 STITCHES PER TRIANGLE ⇒ 480 X 76
= 36,480 STITCHES ON BACK

TOTAL = 69,216 STITCHES

Wire being woven into a mesh at Begg, Cousland & Co. Ltd. in Springfield Road, in 1974.

PEOPLE & PLACE

MATERIALS: WOOL 'DELAINE' BASE, HAND DYED FROM WELD PLANT 🐑 + 🌱
TECHNOLOGY: SILK SCREEN PRINTED
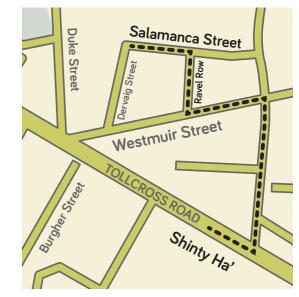**ARTIST/DESIGNER:** BESPOKE ATELIER (TEXTILE DESIGNERS AND PATTERN MAKERS)

Bespoke Atelier's design was developed through a series of screen printing workshops with the local community. The final design, a bold yet intricate pattern-based collage of architectural features, was informed by these sessions, and through conversations with the local community - exploring people's connection with where they live and examining how the area has changed over time.
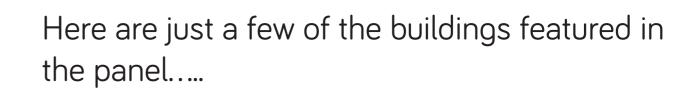
The pattern showcases this combination of old and new, celebrating the Parkhead we know and love. Shapes from original shop front railings which remain in use today form an integral part of the design, in addition to important architectural details from the past and present. These elements provided a beautiful source of inspiration but also a tangible connection to the past.

The Parkhead Rhyme helps to reinforce this connection with place, and the streets mentioned in the rhyme are reflected in the design. Industry, housing and entertainment venues also feature prominently within the design - . The pattern was hand screen printed onto a 'Delaine' - a type of Merino wool - which was hand-dyed using Weld foraged from earlier workshops.

The Parkhead Rhyme. According to nineteenth-century local historian David Willox, this was the traditional response to a strangers' request for directions to Shinty Ha' - the row of weavers cottages on Tollcross Road

Doon Salamanca Street
Alang the Ravel Ra'
Up the Pump Rigs
And intae Shinty Ha'

Here are just a few of the buildings featured in the panel…..

Glasgow Savings Bank Building
Kings Cafe frontage - 1387 Gallowgate
The Forge Shopping Centre
Celtic Park footbal club
Parkhead Bowling Club crest
Parkhead Public School canopy feature
The '3P's' cinema façade
Parkhead and Westmuir Economical Society crest
Beardmore's Drying Sheds, Duke Street
Parkhead Library window feature