

**Anna Ray**  
**Artist in Residence at Forbo Flooring Systems**  
**Art in Manufacturing Season 3**  
**The National Festival of Making**  
**2019**

**The British Textile Biennial**  
**Queen Street Mill Textile Museum**  
**with Super Slow Way**

The Offcut series was inspired by my visits to the Forbo Flooring carpet tile factory in Bamber Bridge. The work has been created with Aquafil synthetic yarn from Italy, and repurposed tufted carpet top cloth from the sampling process at the Forbo factory. At the Queen Street Mill the pieces are seen in a textile heritage context, but also within a space that has striking and unique visual qualities. The light in parts of the mill is interrupted by elements from the weaving process, stored high above the ground on wooden beams. Hundreds of spare healds, with their trailing threads, are stacked together, creating a dense and slatted texture that patterns and partitions the ceiling spaces. The artwork is placed within the existing textural landscape of the mill; drawing parallels with the taught threads of the working hand looms, the repetitious forms of spools and cones of yarn which are dotted about the space, and the miraculous pattern formations of woven cloth.

#### **Offcut-tuft**

During my first visit to Forbo, I picked up a pile of tangled, pale grey, voluminous threads from the shop floor, which were the last offcuts of the tufting process. They had been knotted by hand at one end by an operator, in bundles of about one hundred lengths. At the Forbo factory there is a library of left-over yarn and three smaller tufting machines. Here I found a container piled high with tufted carpet top cloth in an array of different colours. These were samples created by one of the operators at the factory, which were no longer needed and had been set aside for recycling. I have incorporated these top cloths in 'Offcut-tuft'.

#### **Offcut-cord**

The designers at Forbo have created a new carpet tile range called Tessera Chroma, which uses a palette of uplifting hues that can be installed in different combinations. The yarn is larger than life and becomes bulky when steamed. My ancestors were Huguenot silk weavers and fancy trimmings manufacturers in Spitalfields in the 1700s. This new body of work at Forbo is a series of elaborate yarns inspired by traditional Passementerie and the machinery, processes and materials at the factory. 'Offcut-cord' resembles the embellishments created for furnishing and clothing from antiquity to the present, from all over the world - from the tents of nomadic tribes to the grand interiors of stately homes.

#### **Offcut-ends**

At the Forbo Factory, changeover is when the threads are heat sealed together to tuft continuously from one colour to the next to produce different coloured top cloth. It is a lovely process to witness as the arrangement of lined up threads, one colour next to another, create hanging, curved forms. Once the threads are bonded, a fine fringing is left at the end, ready to be cut off and discarded. This artwork also refers to a different textile process - the set up of a weaving loom - where a new thread can be tied on by hand if an end happens to snap from strain.