

# Through the process

## (The Idea of Northern Biomorph II\*)

**Anniken Amundsen's** otherworldly biomorphic textural forms have been one of the hits of the ongoing *Through the Surface* touring exhibition. Here she speaks about the personal journey which brought her to creating these forms, and how the exhibition's mentoring exchange visit to Japan has opened up a new relation to the world of nature.



Agano/Amundsen: Untitled

Anniken Amundsen is a young Norwegian textile artist who has lived in Britain since studying at Winchester School of Art in the mid-1990s. By that time Amundsen had been through a monumental life experience of being treated for Hodgkins Disease – a form of lymph cancer – which resulted in her being drawn to exploring cancer and other forms of ‘abnormal cell growth’ as a subject of her art research. The research has taken her to hospitals, pathology labs and museums in her pursuit of uncovering various aspects of illness of cancer. ‘I have been especially interested,’ she says, ‘in how this illness affects anyone who has been touched by it either directly, or indirectly as a relative or friend. Everyone has some sort of experience with this illness, and I think most of us have a deep fear of it. It felt like an important issue to raise and talk about.’

Amundsen was first drawn to textiles as a therapeutic activity, ‘to make the days go by’ while being treated for lymph cancer. She immediately enjoyed working with a loom and weaving, though soon wanted to take what she was doing several steps further, experimenting with all sorts of non-traditional new materials. These included pipe cleaners, rubber, cellophane, various elastics, metal chains, fluorescent plastic tubes and electrical wires. Recently she has been working with more durable rubber materials such as silicone tubes and oil based rubbers like Nitrile. This has, she says, ‘a more abstract relationship to the body compared to natural rubber, but enforces the references to science and medical associations as well as creating a more other-worldly atmosphere to the pieces. Originally I wanted to cross some boundaries, using everything that could create an exciting meeting between the old