

## Spirit in the machine

NATASHA KIDD makes painting machines. The machines lower a canvas into a vat of white emulsion every few minutes and pull them out again. At first the canvas is virtually submerged. Over days the water in the paint evaporates, leaving a series of thick tide marks and bizarre growths.

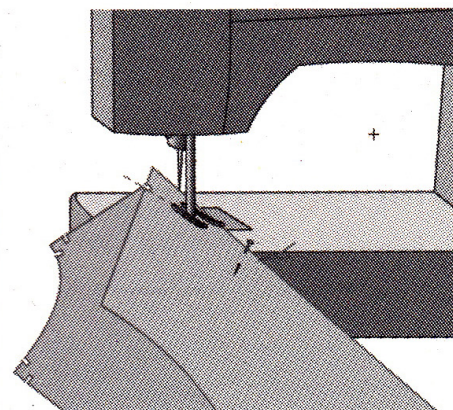
'While it alludes to mass production, these machines don't actually mass produce anything,' says Natasha, who recently joined Chelsea on a fine art research fellowship. To Natasha's surprise, the paintings, once removed from the machine, have their own identity. 'The machines never make the same painting twice, even if the canvas is dipped in the vat of paint for exactly the same number of days – it is dependent on the weather, dust in the atmosphere, the way I made the stretcher...'

Natasha built her first painting machine when she did her Masters at the Slade. 'The mechanism was hidden,' she says. 'All you ever saw

was a canvas suspended, a vat and a plinth.' She had been dipping canvases in paint for some time. 'I wanted to make visible to the people that really mattered what I was experiencing in the studio – the lushness of the paint, the smell, the movement. It is a complete indulgence in paint,' she says. Her latest painting machine will take this even further. It is being built from perspex to give the audience a view of the timers and relays as they whirr and click through their routine. Natasha's interest is now as much in the machine as in the painting. 'They can't exist without each other anyway,' she says.

During the two years since Natasha completed her Masters life has been something of a whirlwind. 'I got into 'New Contemporaries' which was a very good platform for young artists,' she says. 'Fortunately I was taken up by a gallery and had my first show very quickly. I was part of the 'Liverpool Biennale', then I went

## Seamless ar



THE IT research and development unit has created an online course on the basics of garment construction. The course has been written and directed by staff from London College of Fashion and Central Saint Martins.

'There's a real need for a user-friendly, learning programme for pattern-cutting,' says London College of Fashion's Alan Cannon-Jones, who has led the project. Up to now, those learning garment

spiraling into other things. I showed at the Temple Bar Gallery in Dublin and in Newcastle. It felt like my feet didn't touch the floor for almost 12 months.'

Chelsea is a chance for Natasha to submerge herself in art education. 'I have never seen myself as an artist who works in isolation. I hope I can be very involved in the courses here both as a practising artist and as someone who recently left art school.'

Natasha also sees it as a time for reassessment and reflection... if she can fit reflection into her schedule. 'Chelsea offers me a chance to look and experiment. Through conversations with students and staff I hope to benefit my own practice. I have, of course, also got ongoing commitments to my gallery, and art fairs. I have been offered a show at the Bonnington Gallery in Nottingham, and a show in Tuscany – which would be great. Things come up so rapidly...' ■

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