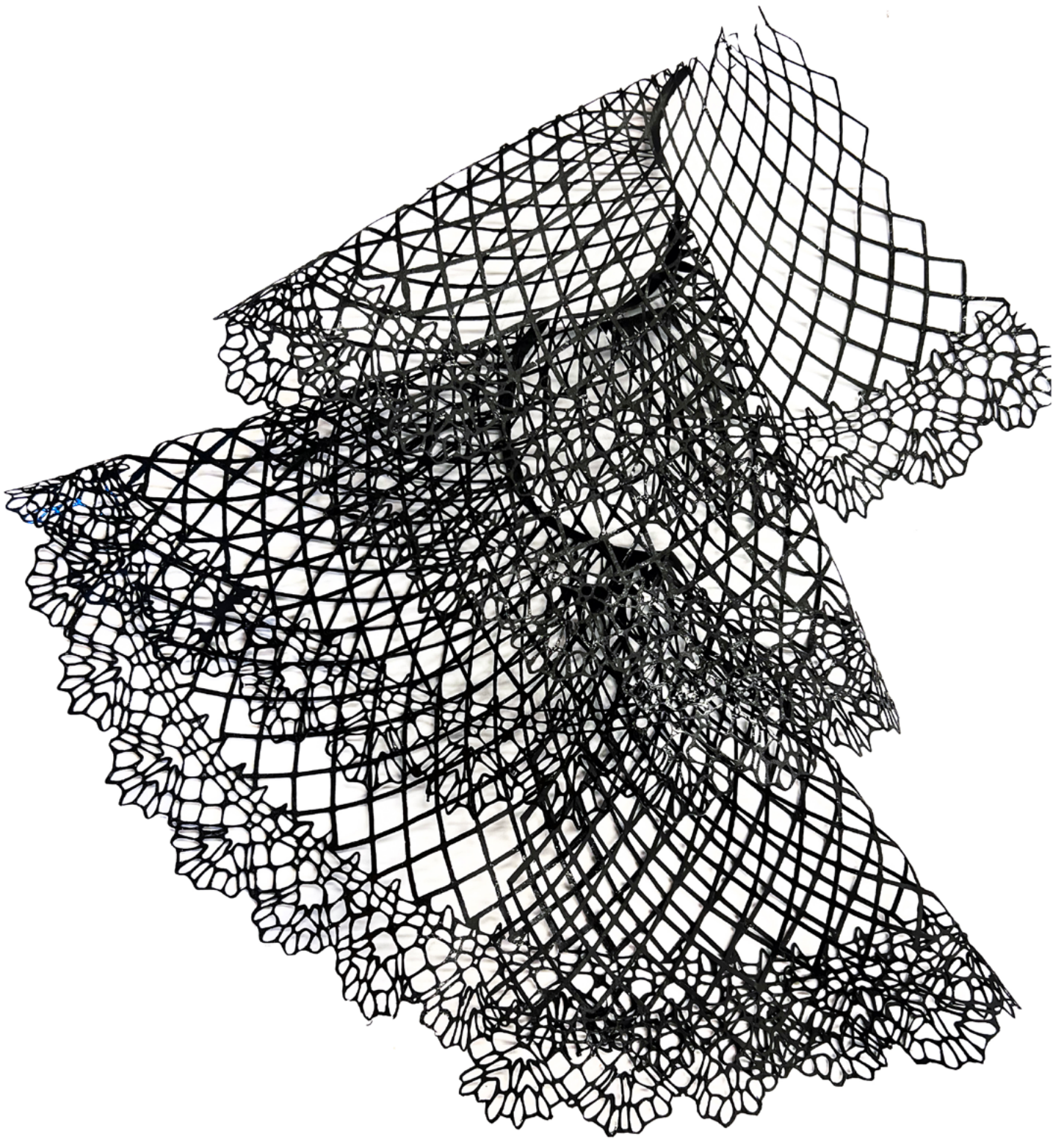


Padina Bondar: Refuse

April 19 2023 - June 18 2023





A revolutionary approach to textile, fashion and sustainability.
Created using disposed materials, no longer destined for landfill.

About the Artist:

Padina Bondar (she/her) is an award-winning, internationally exhibited designer and avid dumpster diver best known for her technical skills and distinctive themes. She is a hybrid maker on a mission to clean up the planet with glamour and finesse. Born in Iran, raised in Toronto, and now living in New York, her multicultural approach and inspirations result in drastic new ideas and creations.

After completing her Bachelor's degree in Fashion & Apparel design at **Toronto Metropolitan University** (formerly Ryerson University), Padina went to New York to **Parsons School of Design** for her Masters of Fine Art in Textiles. In addition to her unique textile practice, she is also a professor at Parsons School of Design, helping students create their own fashion collections.



REFUSE.

Verb

ref.use | ri-'fyüz

: to decline acceptance, consent, or compliance.

REFUSE.

Noun

ref.use | 're-,fyüs ,-,fyüz

: worthless or useless; rubbish; trash; garbage.

REFUSE.

Verb

ref.use | re-fyüz

: rejoin by melting together; combine; synthesis.

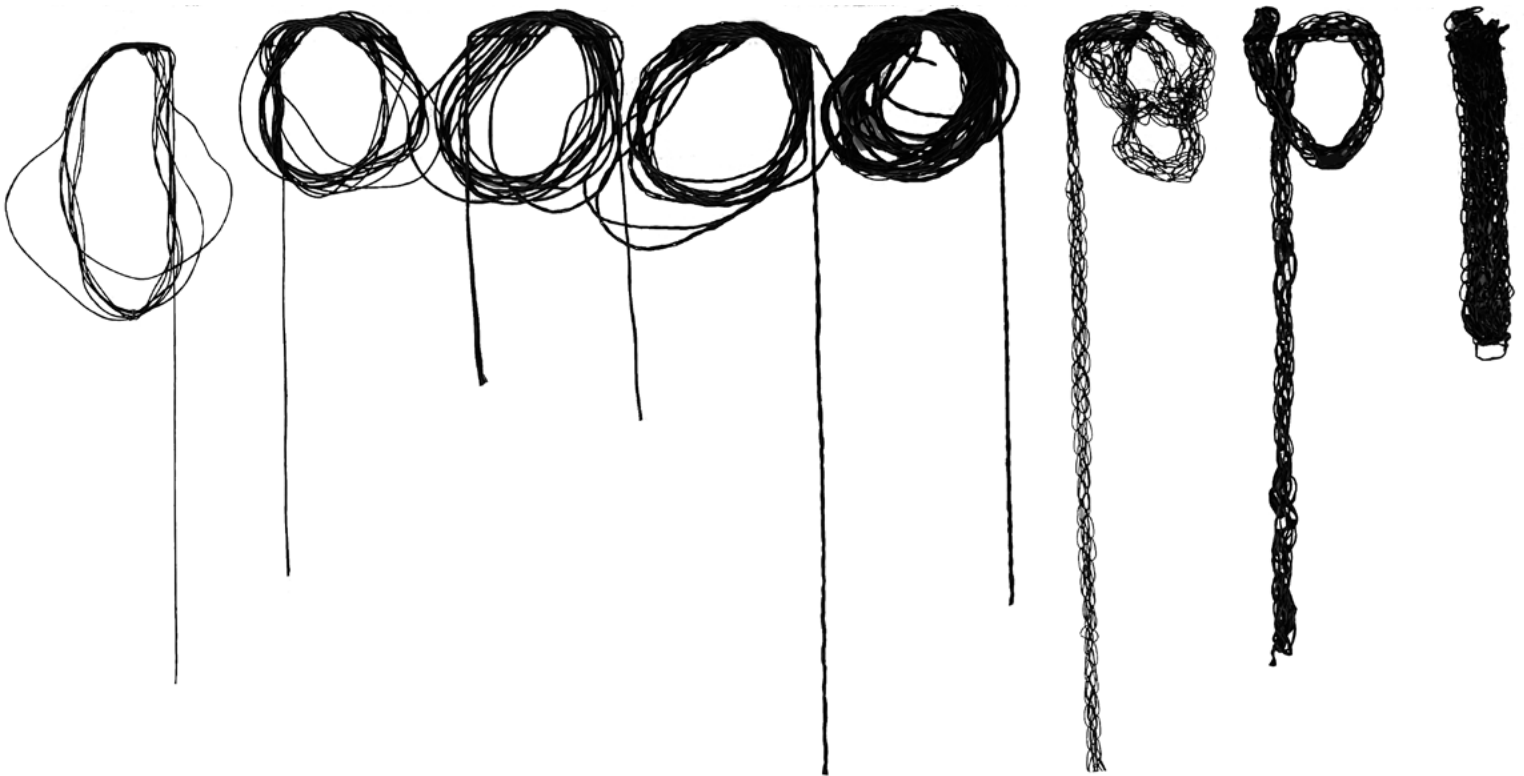
Process & Materials:

Padina works with a lot of different waste materials, but the work in *Refuse* is primarily created with LDPE (low density polyethylene) garbage bags.

The process starts with foraging materials; when we tie our garbage bags, the tops are often untouched, leaving a lot of “clean” waste material. Padina carries scissors with her to cut the tops off of garbage bags, which she collects to transform into her signature thread.

Padina also collects wrapping paper after friends’ birthday parties, caution tape from construction sites, and fabric from *Eileen Fisher’s Waste No More* fabric recycling program.

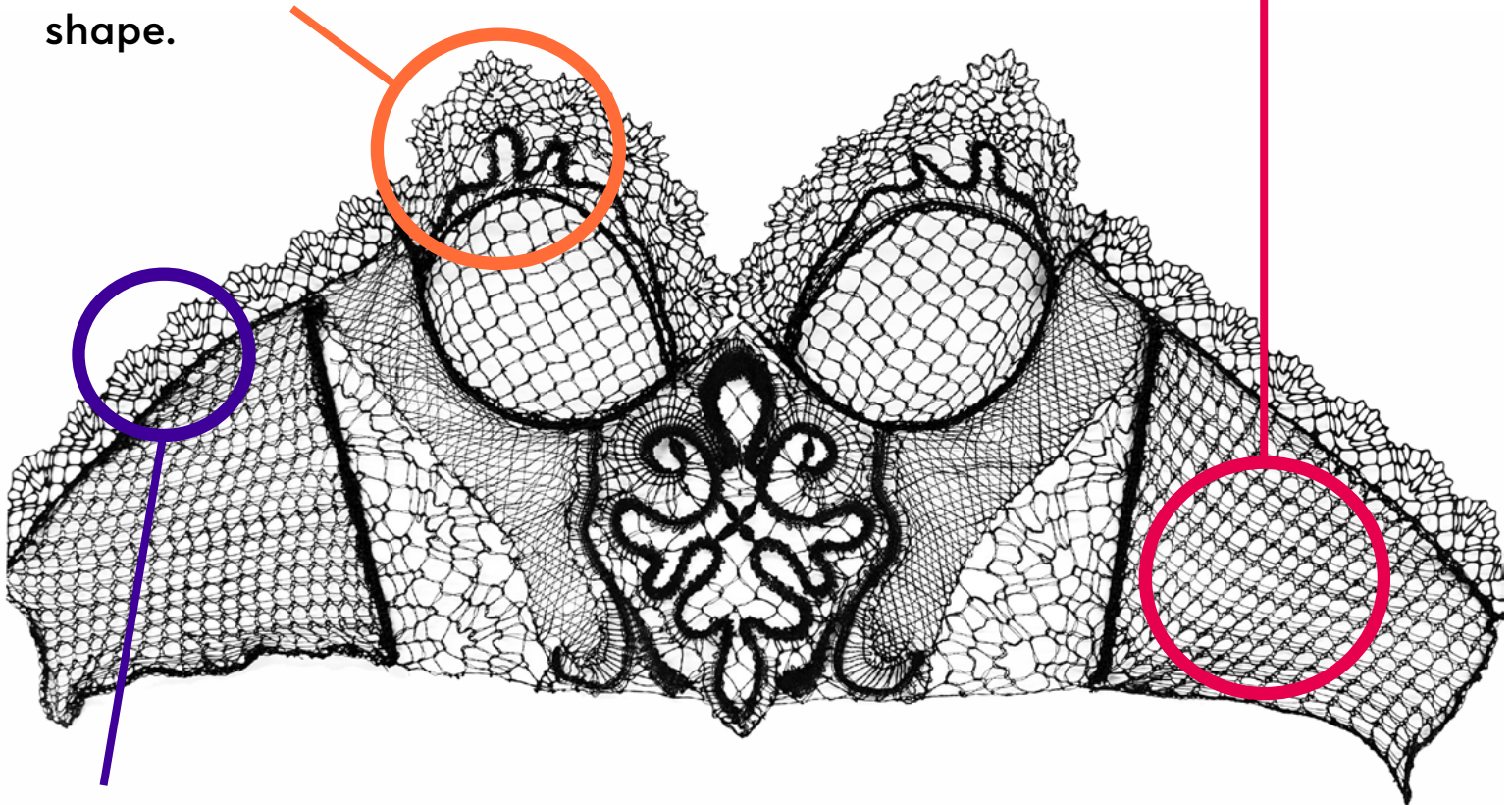
This process recalls how our ancestors may have foraged for plant and animal materials in their natural environment to spin into yarn, which makes us think about how garbage interacts with the land, our bodies, and the other creatures that live in urban centres. It also begs us to ask, how can we change our waste disposal systems, and encourage better recycling practices?



Techniques:

Bobbin lace — The lace in *Refuse* is handmade, created by wrapping thread around bobbins. Each time threads cross in the pattern, they are pinned in place. The resulting lace structure is held by pins for at least 24 hours to maintain its shape.

Knitting — The panels which sit under the arms are created using a knitting machine. This technique mimics lace with rows of looped stitches, while potentially saving the artist hundreds of hours of labour.



CNC — Padina scans her bobbin lace into a computer and uses a CNC to cut the pattern.

Bodice, 2022
LDPE (low density polyethylene) garbage bags;
bobbin lace, knit
Courtesy of the artist

CNC stands for Computerized Numerical Control; the pre-programmed machine cuts from sheets of LDPE garbage bags. Padina uses the popular Cricut machine.



Cosmic Waste (wall hangings), 2021
recycled wool, recycled silk, recycled cotton;
felted

Courtesy of the artist;
made at Eileen Fisher - Waste No More

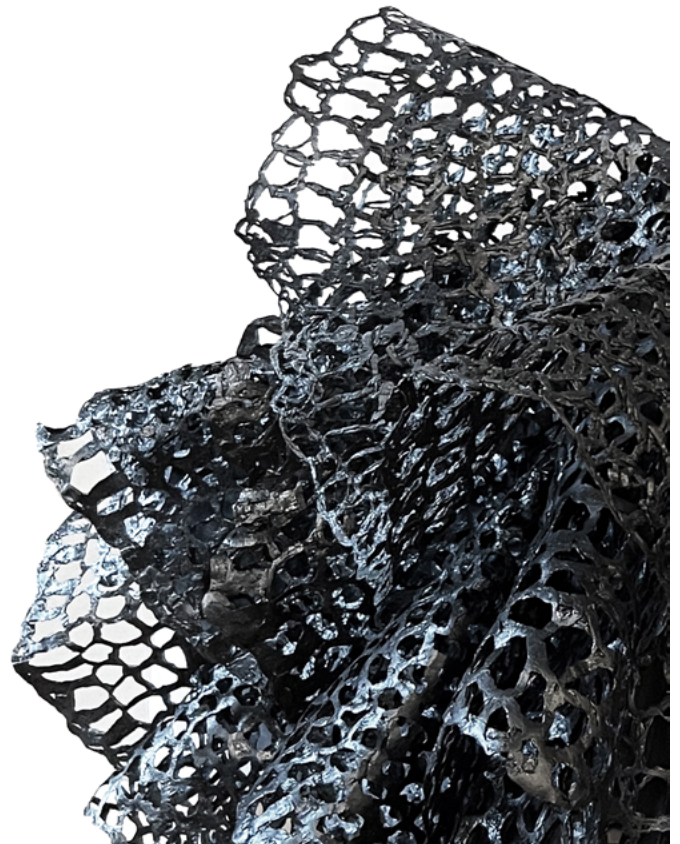
Felting — To create the *Cosmic Waste* series, the artist used a technique called needle-felting, which uses a barbed needle to tangle fibres together and create a new fabric.

Crochet — Padina and her assistants use crochet to loop thicker threads together; the result is a denser fabric which retains its shape. She also uses a hair dryer to help shape and mold the plastic.

Dress (detail, right), 2019

LDPE (low density polyethylene) heavy-duty garbage bags, upcycled synthetic lining; crochet.

Courtesy of the artist



Themes:

Padina's work is not only aesthetically interesting, but it incorporates themes of feminism, freedom of choice, freedom of expression, neurodiversity, and (the most obvious theme) protection of the environment.

Woman, Life, Freedom is a lace portrait referencing a movement of women in Iran choosing not to wear a hijab (head covering), in contrary to the law. It is ambiguous whether or not the woman in the portrait has her head covered, and the dangling, twisted threads are reminiscent of hair.

Focus is a sculpture with a sensor which tracks movement, so that the "eyes" follow the viewer. The artist said this is a reference to her ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder); in her own words: "The piece evokes visual stimulation, escapism, mood swings and distractions".



***Woman, Life, Freedom* (detail), 2023**

LDPE (low density poly-ethylene) garbage bags;
needle lace, bobbin lace, knit
Courtesy of the artist



***Focus*, 2023**

upcycled pearls, glass beads (new), leather scraps,
wire, used wrapping paper, garbage bags;
hand-spun, beaded, embroidered, crochet, laser cut
Courtesy of the artist

Discussion:

"Single-use plastics account for over 40% of over 380 million tons of plastic produced every year. Less than 9% will be recycled. We simply do not have the ability to dispose of waste at the speed we create it. It's time to refuse throwaway culture. Approach our refuse as a resource. And refuse our waste as new materials for a sustainable, circular system."

- **Padina Bondar, 2021**

The Government of Canada is working towards zero plastic waste by the year 2030, starting with new regulations around the sale of single-use plastics. You may have recently noticed how checkout bags have changed from plastic to paper! You can learn more [HERE!](#)

The 5 R's of environmental sustainability are:



REFUSE
REDUCE
REPURPOSE
REUSE
RECYCLE

Padina Bondar is on a mission to **repurpose** garbage bags into textile thread. What are some ways you could repurpose something you would normally throw away?

Definitions & Important Terms:

CNC: Padina scans her bobbin lace into a computer and uses a CNC to cut the pattern. CNC stands for Computerized Numerical Control; the pre-programmed machine uses a blade, and can cut from a variety of materials.

Embroidery: The use of a needle, thread(s), and/or other embellishments, to decorate a piece of fabric.

Knitting: A way of making fabric by creating loops from a single thread. Knitting can be done by hand, or (as Padina does) with a knitting machine.

Lace: A fine, open fabric, created by looping and twisting threads together. There are many types of lace, including but not limited to: bobbin lace, needle lace, knitted lace, crocheted lace, and embroidered lace.

Sustainability: Sharing our natural resources and leaving something behind for the next generation to use.

Spinning: The process of changing fibre into a thread using a drop-spindle or spinning wheel. Padina uses a secretive spinning process to change garbage bags into yarn.

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