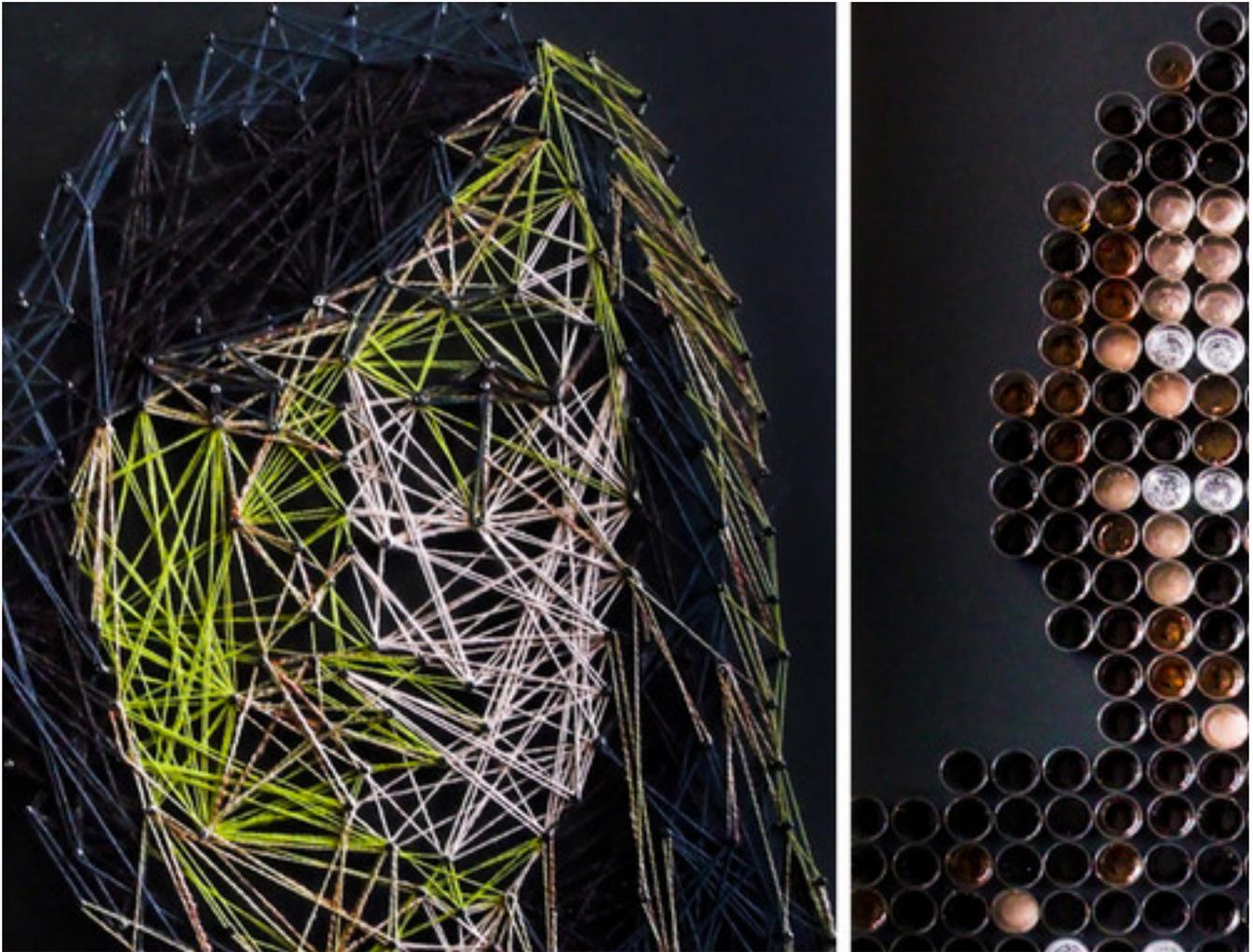


At face value

MIKE LANDRY Telegraph-Journal
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The work in emerging Fredericton-based textile artist Allison Green's debut solo show, *Consume*, now on at the Charlotte Street Arts Centre, belies her experience. That Green, a student in graduate studies at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design, is just as likely not to use textiles as use them, speaks to her advanced wisdom in the medium. She understands textile art isn't something limited to specific materials.

Consume is a collection of eight portraits made with disparate material, from all-purpose flour to yarn.

The material was selected to best illustrate the various addictions of Green's subjects.

She envisioned the project in her first year at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design, from which she graduated last year. Inspired by her own addiction to anti-depressants, Green began to think about how some addictions shape both how we are perceived and how we perceive ourselves. She put a call out via posters and Facebook for people to share their past or present addictions, and created these anonymous portraits based on those that responded to the call.

Green felt it important to use real people so the work retained a genuine gravity. And it's that same weight she seeks to extract from her materials, something she developed in studying surface design in college.

"It got me interested in exploring material for its worth as a message unto itself," says Green. "(Material) can hold so many connotations, more than if I had just painted a work. If I had just painted a cigarette, it wouldn't have all those connotations of when you see and touch a cigarette."

The difficulty with using motley material is letting it dictate the form, as it's easy for the artist's vision to dominate. A self-admitted "control freak," Green is aware of her own desire to shape things, but given that awareness she uses her art to overcome the urge, "to try to see the beauty in how (the material) wants to behave."

For Consume, the cigarettes, which she filled with wheat cereal rather than tobacco, were the most difficult to manipulate. They were fragile, and like all the materials in the show, forced her to problem solve.

The topic of addiction also suits the repetitive qualities of textile work, something Green says is part of the reason the medium appeals to her. So while Consume addresses addiction, these are not bleak works.

"I do believe addiction is negative, but I wanted to have people understand it's something they can relate to rather than demonize, and I wanted to show the relationship between different kinds of addiction. I wanted to show them as equal."

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