

C. Zoe Edelman  
Third-year Miller Art Scholar  
Arts Scholar Third-Year Award Application

## **Forming Landscapes Through the Art of Tufting**

### **Project Summary:**

My proposal is to create a rug through tufting to demonstrate large changes to our landscapes due to climate change. The goal is to scale the landscapes down to be more tangible for audiences to view and feel for themselves. I hope to center this project around my final thesis for the new media concentration in my studio art major. I am requesting about \$2,000 to fund the unique tools for the tufting process.

### **Project Overview:**

Recently, climate change has become a prominent part of the media we consume. As society watches it become a pawn for political manipulation, it is misrepresented to twist the views of the people for the benefit of politicians and large corporations. A large impact of climate change is the rapidly changing landscapes all around the globe. Prime examples of this include the rising coastlines, raging wildfires, melting glaciers, and expanding deserts into rainforest land. This is something that many of us are merely told, but do not see, as we are limited to the scope of our own realities.

I feel that we need to take a different approach to informing the community about these landscape changes. Because these large scale ideas are so hard to grasp, if I can make a physical representation for audiences to view and feel, I can convey these changes in an easier way. To do this I want to make a rug through the art of tufting. Tufting is a form of textile making where thread is inserted onto another fabric, creating a rug. This art form is developing popularity and I want to learn more about it and hone this skill. I have taken a class on it already and plan to take more to keep building the skill to do this. I am choosing tufting over other mediums of expression for this project because I want audiences to be able to walk on my piece. Our landscapes are the ground that we walk on, and it would be quite immersive if people can feel that through their feet.

The rug itself I want to be one continual landscape that changes into different biomes. I want to have an ocean with melting glaciers and coastal erosion, and this beach will lead into a desert that is expanding into the rainforest. The rainforest will then expand into areas with wildfires which burn out onto a mountain range impacted by an increase of natural disasters such as landslides and avalanches. The mountains will circle back around to the ocean, creating a full slice of our Earth. With tufting I plan on picking various colors to match the landscapes, but also use it to show the alteration of nature, especially in locations where water may be more polluted or trees are dying. To show elevation I will cut into the rug to shape it with carving scissors to whatever landscape I am trying to make.

Tufting requires a lot of special equipment which will make up the expenses of this grant. There's the base cloth of the rug, and of course the yarn that goes into the rug itself. The tufting tool is called a tufting gun, and this works similar to a sewing machine where it sticks the yarn into the fabric and it is set in place, except the gun cuts the yarn off into pieces. The cloth you are tufting onto is held taught by a wooden frame, and that is your work space. When you are done tufting there is an adhesive that goes onto the back of your rug, and then a lining. For shaping the rug I will use carving scissors for easier and more precise cuts. Additional smaller aspects will be listed in the cost breakdown. My one concern is where I will set up the space to work on this project, as this setup requires a table to set the wooden frame onto, and general space to move around. I'm sure I can figure this out and set up a table in my house or find an area in Ruffin to set up and take down easily.

Federico will be an excellent mentor for this project as one of the New Media professors at UVA. He is always encouraging students to try various mediums of art, and since tufting is more unique in the UVA space I am sure he will help me out in getting it all together. Federico also likes to have deep involvement in his work. He has a lot of beautiful works with heavy background and meaning to each individual aspect. With this, he encourages his students to do the same with their own projects. As my piece aims to create a lot of meaning with my little decisions, Federico will be a good mentor to push me in a positive direction to keep those aspects and even add more.

At the end of the next academic year I hope to be able to show my rug in the fourth year studio art majors thesis exhibitions. Ideally I'd be able to lay it out in a space where people can interact with it easily. If my exhibition is before the Miller Arts showcase, I will take pictures of people interacting with it to bring to the showcase. At the showcase itself I won't be able to bring in the entire rug, but I can include pictures of the process and the final project on a poster or virtual slides, and I can easily make smaller versions of the rug to bring as samples for people to touch at that event. When these events are done I hope to bring this rug into my own home for people to still experience.

### **Timeline:**

Summer 2024: Take a tufting course to hone skills, prepare materials order, plan structure of rug

2024-2025 Academic Year: Start and work on rug - continuous planning, tufting, and shaping

April 2024: Finish rug and present it at senior thesis exhibition and Miller Arts showcase

### **Budget:**

Most of the items on this list are from the company Tuft The World. This is because it is where I learned how to tuft and therefore I am familiar with their materials, especially with the tufting gun. I will include links to their products in the details. Some of these items may go in and out of stock, so I am basing this budget off of the information I can get right now. I aim to get these materials in mid August when I begin my project.

<b>Main Tufting Materials</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Details</b>
Tufting Starter Kit	\$365.00	This includes a basic tufting gun, tufting frame 1 yard of tufting cloth and a 30 day warranty. <a href="#">Link</a>
Primary Tufting Cloth - 5 yards	\$175.00	Obtaining five extra yards of cloth will allow for me to make a larger rug and cut it to fit the shapes of the landscape. <a href="#">Link</a>
Yarn	\$400	As this is a project based on climate change I hope to gather my yarn in an eco-friendly way, be it second-hand or something more sustainable. If I cannot find specific colors I will purchase them new. Due to these factors and the nature of this project I am unsure exactly how much yarn I am buying and how much it will cost, so this is a rough estimate.
Carpet Backing Adhesive	\$62.50	This is what holds the rug together at the end. <a href="#">Link</a>
Final Backing Cloth - 2 yards x3	\$120.00	This sticks to the adhesive to finalize the rug and secure the yarn. <a href="#">Link</a>
Bar Clamps x2	\$27.94	These clamps keep the wooden frame to the table keeping it stable to work with. They could come from anywhere. This price comes from Home Depot.
<b>Other Costs</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Details</b>
Twill Tape x2	\$10	Twill tape adds the finishing touch to the edges of the rug to make it a little more refined. <a href="#">Link</a>
Duckbill Scissors	\$15	The angle and cut of these scissors is optimal for cutting smaller aspects of the rug compared to normal scissors. <a href="#">Link</a>
Electric Rug Carving Scissors	\$375.00	These scissors will help me carve out the landscapes in my piece with ease. <a href="#">Link</a>

Service Warranty - 1 year	\$100	As the tufting machine is not something I am confident in repairing, a warranty while I am working on this project would help just in case anything were to go wrong. <a href="#">Link</a>
Two-Day Tufting Workshop - Large Rug	\$350	The large rug class will help me take the skills I used in the first course and amplify them in a more involved way. I aim to take this course over the summer to prepare for this project that I will complete during the school year. <a href="#">Link</a>
<b>Grand Total:</b>	\$2,000.44	
<b>Arts Awards Income:</b>	\$2,000.44	

**Evidence of Participation in the Arts:**

At UVA I am a very active member of the art community. Academically I am a studio art major with a concentration in new media. Outside of these new media classes I am also taking cinematography and printmaking. In my other major, computer science, I am focusing my studies on design and use my artistic skills to design websites and the like as well. Outside academics I am heavily involved in the WXTJ student radio. I am one of their event directors and help schedule bands together and sometimes do some poster making for them. With this poster making I do general freelance graphic design work for other clubs such as the materials science engineers t-shirt, or redesigning the fencing club logo. I am also a part of the UI/UX club at UVA which focuses on design as mentioned earlier. Within the Arts Scholars program I have taken both semesters of the seminar and actively participate in class. Recently we had a meeting with the vice provost for the arts at UVA and I spoke a lot about the Adobe Creative Cloud. I hope to volunteer more of my time to talk to more people about this issue alongside the Miller Arts program.