

embellish[®]

THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE FOR TEXTILE ARTS



With inspiration from Textures
projects | embroidery | mixed media | articles



2021
Issue 45

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**For more of Crossing Threads®
(Lauren and Kassandra Hernandez)
please see page 3**



Break Through
Image by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists



ON THE COVER -
Texture (p 18)
– by Dale Rollerson

Measurements within this issue are as per the author of the project or article. No attempt has been made to convert between Metric and Imperial measurements due to the errors that may creep in.

One inch = 2.54 centimetres;

Ten centimetres = 3.94 inches.

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A good idea begins with a good fabric

embellish®

Issue 45/March 2021

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editor's notes

This issue of **Embellish** is absolutely filled to the brim with examples of different textures across the projects and articles.

The incredible weaving and knotting on a *very* large scale by Lauren and Kass Hernandez of Crossing Threads® is absolutely overflowing with textures. Their work is so inspirational!

On the other end of the scale, the textures within Elizabeth Stanley's artwork *The Jewel of the Ocean* (right) are so *very* tiny, but by no means less incredible.

In between there is a *huge* range for you, with techniques based on the quite traditional to the quite "out there". I'm sure you will find something to inspire you.

Penny Eamer shows how plastic can be recycled into sculpted artwork with a little help from a heat gun. She also gives us an introduction to design elements, the building blocks for creating a design. Anne Mitchell explores using ingredients from the pantry to add texture to your dyeing. Carole Douglas gives us a quick trip through New Zealand with her postcard, highlighting the varied uses of native flax. Dale Rollerson combines needle felting and stitching to produce a colourful textured bowl. We profile artist Margaret Ford who, amongst other techniques, uses crotchet to provide bold textures on 3D shapes.

If you are into needle felting you will be intrigued by the life-like results produced by Cindy-Lou Thompson in the book we review—we are fortunate to have two copies from Hubble & Hattie, the publishers, to give away to our readers!

Now that you've been inspired, how about having a play with the new postcard swap I have for you: **"Silk"**. You may choose anything relating to the theme. The completed size *must* be postcard size (A6—a quarter of A4 size, 4"x 6" approximately) and you may use any technique, or combination of techniques to create it, so long as it includes *textiles*. On the back of the postcard, please write your name, address, phone number and email address (if you have one). Completed postcards should be posted to arrive no later than 1st June, to "Silk" Postcard Swap, PO Box 469, Ashburton VIC 3147, and include a *stamped** self-addressed C5 or B5 envelope (so that the *swapped* postcard can be posted to you—C6 size is too small if there is a postcard that is on the thicker side, so you are limited in the postcards which can be swapped back to you...). Don't forget to add a note with some information about your techniques and inspiration.

Some of the postcards will be displayed in **Embellish** #47 (September), which has the theme *Silk*, and *all* will be displayed on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/ArtWearPublications in a photo album early in September. The postcard with the most "likes" on Facebook at midnight on 30/09/2021 will win \$100.00 to spend with one of our advertisers in the September issue.

Yours in textile art

Lynda

Lynda@artwearpublications.com.au



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ARTIST PROFILE

Crossing Threads®



Lauren and Kass Hernandez

Laren and Kass with *The Divide* at Gallery 76 - Image by Darren Luk, Courtesy of the Artists



The Divide - Left: in detail. Above: the finished work
Images by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists

Artist Profile: Crossing Threads®

*Crossing Threads® is the collaborative work of **Lauren and Kass Hernandez**, Australian-born sisters of Filipino heritage based in Sydney. These self-taught tapestry artists first explored the practice of weaving in early 2015 by attending a beginner's workshop. Since then, through extensive experimentation fuelled by curiosity, passion and collaboration, Crossing Threads® has evolved into a strong brand that services both domestic and international clientele.*

From where do you draw inspiration?

We continually draw spiritual inspiration from surrounding landscapes and personal experiences, and materialise this through our abstract designs. We are known for our large-scale and highly textural handwoven pieces that are organic, raw and abundant. We seek to emulate the natural forms found in nature. Our carefully curated fibre selections

include Australian Merino wool, plant-based fibres, up-cycled/dead-stock fabrics and other foraged items that aren't traditionally used in fibre art. Our practice has led us to develop our recognisable 'interknot' technique, made up of intertwining hand-knotted chains of varying texture and thickness which graduate to a relief.

Describe your practice?

Our practice aims to inspire, evoke

emotion and cultivate authentic connection. Each new day brings the opportunity to 'weave' your reality—whatever it may be. As our lives interconnect with others, each connection forms a unique thread that makes up the tapestry of life.

We explore both the internal and external tapestries we each possess, with our woven art being fibrous pages from our personal diaries.



***Traverse** - Above left: the finished work. Above right: in detail. Below: Working on the piece in the studio. Images by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists*

What challenges have you overcome in creating large works?

We love to jam-pack our weaves with dense texture to create tactile pieces that make you want to reach out and run your hands over it.

Our large works are possible thanks to our Dad, an architect, who has played an integral role in creating quality large-scale custom looms to support the large-scale weaves to cater to our creative process.

The pieces can weigh up to 25kg and it is so important to ensure that the structural integrity is maintained within the piece when we cut it off the loom. From trial and error, we have learned how to balance the design with an equal distribution of weight, not to mention using the appropriate materials that are strong but flexible to help offset points of tension to avoid the weaves from warping. It truly requires a team effort when we cut the tapestries off the loom and during installation, where both our partners have been there to lend a helping hand.





Pahiyas - Images by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists

How has the coronavirus pandemic affected your practice and your ability to make a living?

Both of us have consciously chosen to work on Crossing Threads® in a part-time capacity (one day a week). We work in our corporate professions four days a week in advertising and financial technology. As a result, this has somewhat relieved us from the financial pressure and our art remains a creative outlet that is needed more than ever.

At first, during the lockdown in March 2020, there was a halt in business. However, as our clients spent more time at home, it was very optimistic to see both private collectors and design firms start to reconsider acquiring fibre art for their homes and projects. We have recently completed commissions for local and international clients and have a few booked to take us into the new year (2021).

Our practice remains a solitary one, and the luxury of spending more time at home means that we have more bandwidth to create.



Undertow - work in progress. Image by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists



Riptide - work in progress. Image by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists



Above: Fibre curation for **Kalikasan**. Right: **Kalikasan**, work in progress.
Image by Crossing Threads®, Courtesy of the Artists

Below: **Break Through** in detail.
Image by Darren Luk,
Courtesy of the Artists

What's next for Crossing Threads®?

We are delighted to be invited by the Australian Design Centre to exhibit in a group exhibition called **Isolate Make: Creative Resilience in a Pandemic**. In response to COVID-19, **Isolate Make** explores how creative practice may have changed during this time either as a result of social isolation, the associated restrictions and production challenges, or simply in response to the tragic global events.

We are enjoying working on our next range of custom CT cushions and developing our third collection of framed tapestry art—but also looking forward to some down-time to connect with family and friends.

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PEGBOARD ART:

Cross Stitch Cat



LYNDA WORTHINGTON

In my search for something textural, I thought “why not go BIG?”—so I did!

Here is cross stitch on a humungous scale on a metal sheet of pegboard, 900mm high by 450mm wide. This is 36 holes by 18 holes (or 17 by 35 squares/crosses). This created a small problem—I needed to design something thin and tall.

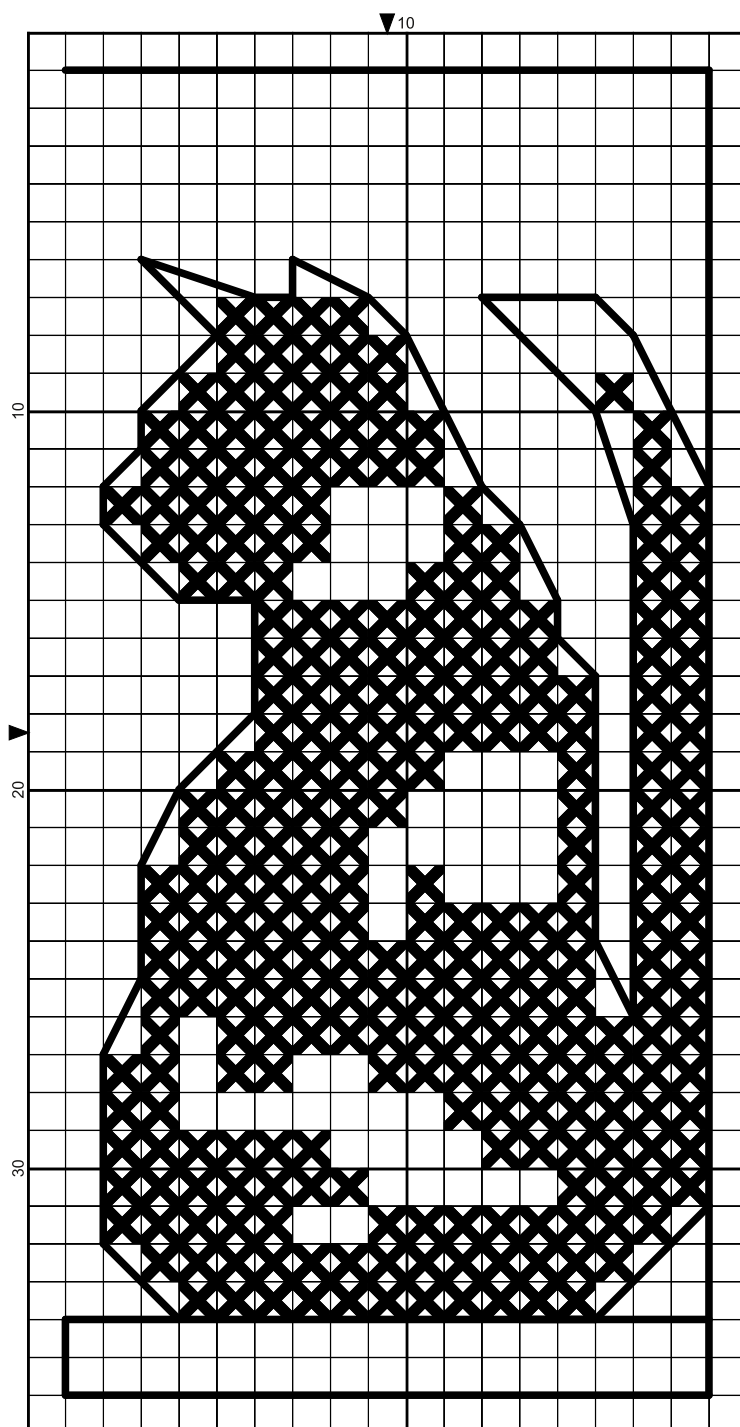
The result? A cat on a windowsill looking out the window.

Using thin yarns or embroidery threads would not do the job. Therefore, I took some 4ply knitting/crochet cotton and did a bit of French Knitting to create tubes of knitted yarn. These would compress easily to go through the holes—in places five times through the one hole. One metre of yarn created about 6cm length of knitted tube. The whole project took around 44m of knitted tube.

Before you panic and think about all the lifting of yarn over a nail, one by one to create the tube, I did use an automatic French Knitting machine which you wind by hand (thank you Santa!), which meant I could create it much faster.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- This design uses cross stitch and back stitch.
- All cross stitches need to go in the same direction.
- I used an old laundry fold-away clothes drying rack (the sort that has an X shape when viewed from the side) to lay the pegboard on while I worked—make sure you don’t tie your work to it accidentally underneath!
- Do not let yarn at the back go across an open hole (you will see it from the front).
- Thread the length of yarn at the end of the knitting through a large plastic needle and tie it there—much easier to use the needle to get through the holes, especially when other tubes are already going through the holes.
- Use sewing thread to stitch the end of each tube to other tubes at the back of your work to tie them off.
- Don’t use lengths of knitted tube longer than about 4m as the stress going through the holes will start to rough up the fibres.





From the Pantry: designing textured fabrics

CHOOSING YOUR COLOURS

I'm sure we can all think back to when we were children and remember what happened to our plasticine or play doh (depending on our generation) after we had been working with it for a while. Yes, mix too many colours and you'll end up with what I affectionately call 'plasticine grey', or maybe brown. Here are a few colour clues for you:

- Colours that are side by side on the colour wheel (analogous colours) will not go murky.
- Colours from opposite sides of the colour wheel (complementary colours) will create brown; or depending on how many colours are used, grey.

In this folding technique where we are blending the colours as we work, colour choice is important. The good news? If the colours become a little murky, using salt will often help to 'sort them out' and restore their brightness.

ANNE MITCHELL

From dressmaking and quilting to silk scarves and home décor, designing exclusive hand-coloured fabrics can be as simple as opening your pantry door. There's a world of excitement stowed away in there just waiting to be explored. Let's enjoy the amazing textures that salt and sugar can create in fabrics large and small.

In my project in the 'Layers' issue of **Embellish** (issue #43), I talked about the randomness of working with pool salt—any salt really—and I promised there'd be MORE. So here we go!

This designing technique is done by folding pieces of light-weight fabric, large or small, to a manageable size, then pressing liquid colours through the layers. It's so much simpler and more controllable than having the fabric spread out over a large area.

Colours are applied to penetrate the layers; then after blending them, the fabric is simply spread onto a large sheet of plastic ready to add our

'discoveries' from the pantry to create the textures of the finished design.

Colouring the Fabric FOLD AND PRESS METHOD:

I am using orange, red and aubergine diluted 1:3 in this piece of polycotton fabric 115 x 115 cm in size.

Fold fabric to a manageable size (photo 1). The number of layers you can fold will depend on the weight of the fabric – for example, up to 16 layers for fine fabrics like silk, or 6 to 12 layers for heavier fabrics like poplin or homespun.

Dunk the folded fabric into a bowl of water, and squeeze it holding it



under the water until all the bubbles come out (photo 2). This is a good indication that the fabric is wet through all the layers.

HINT: If you're unsure that it is wet through, open it up a little and check! Squeeze out the excess water until the fabric no longer feels drippy. Lay the fabric, still folded, onto the sheet of plastic.

Apply your chosen colours in blotches, pressing firmly into the fabric as you scribble them onto the top layer, and making sure you leave gaps 1 to 2 fingers wide between the colours to avoid overloading the fibres (photo 3).

Press firmly down on the colours with your hands to ensure they have penetrated the layers. If you do not want to smudge the colours, lay a piece of clear plastic over the top before you press down.

Flip the fabric over and touch up the colours from the reverse side (photo 4). You shouldn't need to add nearly as much colour from this side.

Blend the colours by gently rolling the fabric (photo 5). You will see the colours move together as you roll. Do not overwork it!

GENTLY squeeze out the excess colour (photo 6) and use another piece of damp fabric to mop up the puddle (photo 7).

Lay this fabric on another piece of plastic and add salt or sugar to it as you wish. My mop-up (photo 8) is on heavier white cotton, using cooking salt. The markings are very different because of the weave of the fabric

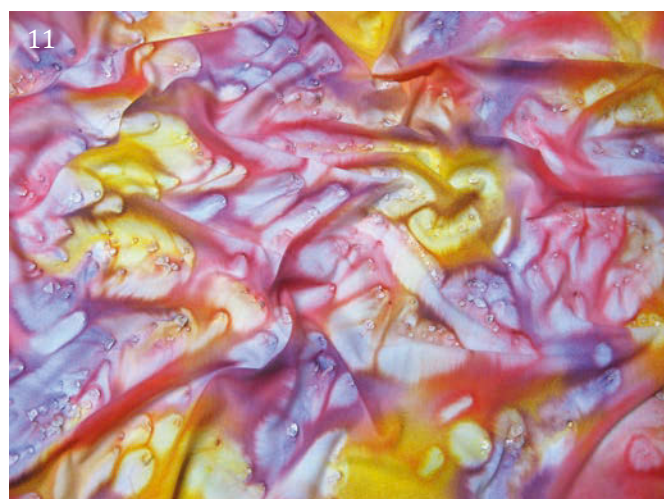


EQUIPMENT

Liquid Radiance or other similar liquid colours—I am working with Liquid Radiance diluted 1 part concentrate to somewhere between 3 and 15 parts water depending on the colour strength required,
Large sheet of plastic to protect your work area, and pieces of plastic-covered cardboard for smaller fabrics,
Old sheet on your work table,
Old hand towel to wipe your fingers and to clean the boards or plastic,
Dish or small bucket of water to dampen your fabrics before applying the colours,
Salts from your pantry: rock salt, cooking salt, table salt, salt flakes, ... whatever you can find. The size of the grains will determine the size of the markings,
Sugars—check the different size grains of those too. Caster sugar will give finer markings than white sugar. Raw sugar and brown sugar will be different again. Check for 'hundreds and thousands' or 'sprinkles' lurking in the corner. They are, after all, sugar!
Epsom Salt and pool salt—you may need to find these in your bathroom or shed, not in your pantry,
Disposable gloves (optional)—the colours I am using are non-toxic and wash off skin easily with soap and water and a nail brush.

SUITABLE FABRICS

Light to medium-weight fabrics are ideal—muslin and cotton batiste, soft polycotton and silk, but no thicker than homespun and white (bleached) calico. Try light-weight synthetics and rayons. Each fibre will create different salt or sugar effects depending on the weave of the fabric. Although working on white fabrics will result in true colours for the final design, consider working on pale-coloured fabrics to give your work an extra level of interest and delight. *Note:* Unbleached calico or heavy-weight fabrics are difficult to work with for this technique. Tight weaves and thick fabrics will not allow the colours to penetrate the layers sufficiently.



and size of the salt grains. This piece will coordinate with your project as it contains all the colours of your main piece—or is simply an interesting fabric for another project.

Dry the plastic where you have been working with an old towel, ready for the next step.

Carefully open up the fabric from its folds and spread it on the large sheet of plastic.

Scrunch it (photo 9) to form the pattern of lights and darks—areas up off the plastic will dry darker, while areas down against the plastic will dry lighter.

Decision Time: Salt or Sugar?

When using **salt**, the colour is drawn to each grain, and the size of the markings will be dependent on the size of the grains of salt. The colour remains in the fabric when salt is removed and saltiness rinsed out. My preference is to use salt sparingly. It will create more dramatic effects. If too much salt is sprinkled onto the fabric, colour movement will be limited and textures less defined.

When using **sugar**, the grains of sugar dissolve in the moisture and remove the colour from those areas. Use sugar sparingly so as not to remove too much colour! It is best used on light-weight fabrics like silk and fine polycotton.

Forming the Design with Salt or Sugar

My chosen salt for this fabric is rock salt.

Add your chosen salt or sugar, depending on the size and style of markings you wish to create. Sprinkle the salt or sugar on sparingly, using your fingers to avoid overload (photo 10).

HINT: *Repurposed spice jars are ideal to help with sprinkling finer salts and sugars.*

Allow colours time to dry and the salt or sugar to work its magic (photo 11)! Drying time will depend on the type of fabric, the size of the crystals, and the weather on the day.

Note A: *In general, do not dry fabrics in the sun for these techniques. They will dry too quickly and the patterns you are aiming to achieve will not have time to develop.*

NOTE B: *If the pattern has developed to your liking and you wish to stop the movement of colours, it is then OK to hasten the drying time by putting it in the sun; or carefully use a hair dryer pointing it straight downwards so you don't make a mess with the salt if there's no sun to help you. The heater light in the bathroom works well for this too.*

VITAL: Salt **MUST** be rinsed from the fabric completely to prevent it getting into the mechanism of your sewing machine, or onto your ironing board and iron. Saltiness will travel from surface to surface of fabrics, boards and work sheets if you are not careful when using it. Rinse all items used in salting techniques to avoid salt going into places where you don't want it!

Removing the Salt or Sugar, Rinsing and Ironing

SALTS: When fabric is completely dry, scrape the salt towards the middle of the fabric and pour the salt back into the container. If salt feels damp, place it on a baking tray in a hot oven for 15 to 20 minutes, then let it cool before returning it to its container.

When the salt crystals have been removed, the salty residue in the fabric must be rinsed out. In rainy, stormy, or humid weather, the remaining saltiness will continue to absorb moisture from the atmosphere, making the fabric feel clammy.

To be sure the colours are completely dry before rinsing, put the fabric on the clothesline if sunny, or use a hair dryer to blow it dry.

Do not put it in a clothes dryer as this can add saltiness to the surface in the dryer which is difficult to remove and will transfer to other items in the dryer.

SUGARS: It will often be difficult to see where the sugar crystals have dissolved as the colour is still sitting on the surface of the fabric at this stage. The sugar crystals will usually have dissolved completely. However, when using decorative sugars (for example 'hundreds and thousands' or 'sprinkles'), these may not dissolve completely and will usually leave a stain where they have been at work. This extra stain is food colouring and will disappear when the fabric is rinsed.

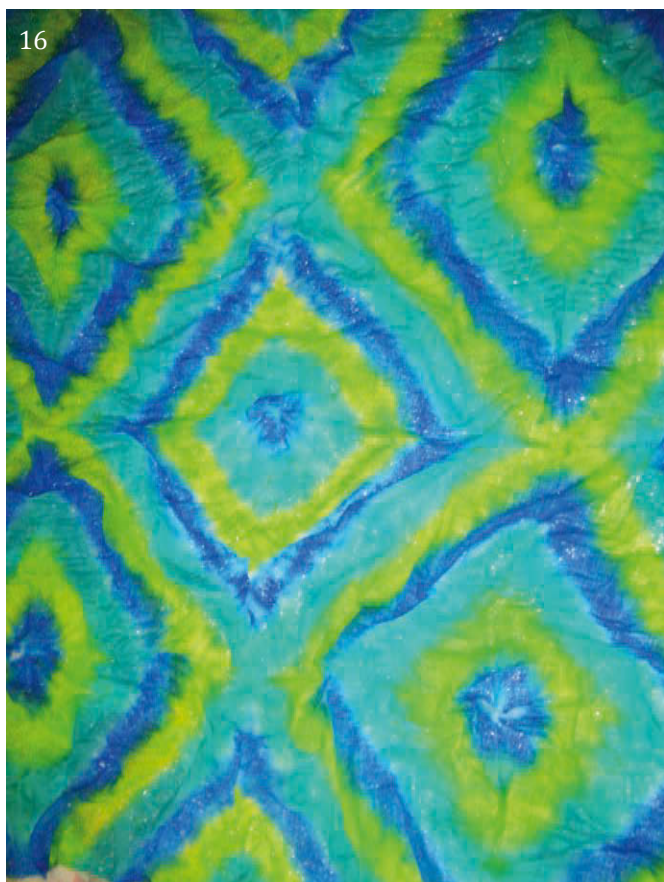
To Rinse: Dunk the fabric in a bucket (or sink) of clean water, swishing it gently with your fingers. The fabric is now in salty or sugary water. Rinse once more in clean water to remove that residue, and a third time to be *sure* all traces of salt or sugar are gone.

When lots of salt has been used (for example in large pieces of fabric), rinse again a couple of extra times to *make absolutely sure* no saltiness remains. You may notice some colour stain in the water during the rinsing. This is from colour that sticks to the salt grains and needs to come away; or is the colour from where the sugars have dissolved. It will not affect the colour bonded to the fibres. When completely rinsed, peg the fabrics on the line to dry.

Important: When Liquid Radiance colours are completely dry, they are stable in the fabric. You cannot move them or remove them. It is therefore OK to rinse different coloured fabrics together. They will not bleed into each other.

Heat Setting: Even though the colours will not come out when dry, heat setting is important to restore the softness of the fibres and maximise the life of the colours for light and colourfastness in the fabrics you have designed.

Set iron to the temperature suitable for your fabric, and press for ½ minute for really strong colours or up to 2 minutes for pale colours, using the steam setting (photo 12).



VARIATIONS

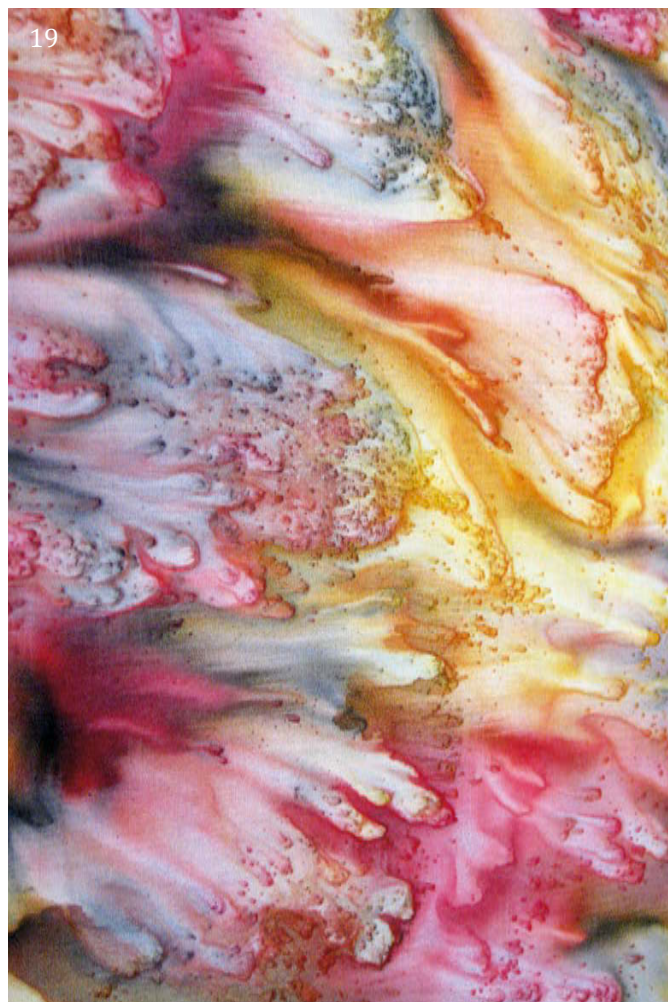
Follow all steps described when trying these.

Creating patterns with the Colours:

With fabric folded and wet, apply the colours in stripes instead of blotches, still maintaining a distance between the stripes so they have room to move (photo 13). Roll the colours in the same direction as the stripes (photo 14). Open very carefully, scrunch a little to enhance the pattern, and add salt 'to taste' (photos 15 & 16). My piece was done on cotton muslin – yes, 'bandage fabric' – and Epsom Salt was used.

Random Application of Colours:

See how this crazy mix of scribbles and blotches has created an amazing piece of fabric. I have worked on polycotton using red, brown, black, and russet (yellow + brown mix), then added Epsom salt (photos 17 to 19).



Different Scrunches – or No Scrunches!

After you have coloured the fabric and spread it on the large sheet of plastic, *you* are in charge of what will happen. Try all sorts of things! See what happens when you leave the fabric flat. The blue-green fabric in photo 20 is polycotton, coloured with a dilution of 1 part Liquid Radiance concentrate to 15 parts water and the colours are still quite strong. The left side of the image shows the result of using parallel scrunches, and the right side shows what happens with the fabric lying flat, no scrunches at all. Both have been textured with rock salt.

Concertina Pleat:

Colours have been applied in bands on concertinaed silk (photo 21). Try this on other fabrics too. Photo 22 shows the result of rock salt on the concertinaed silk.

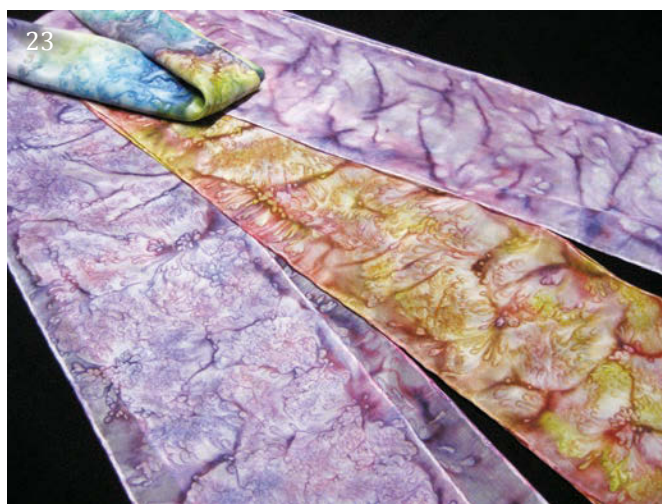
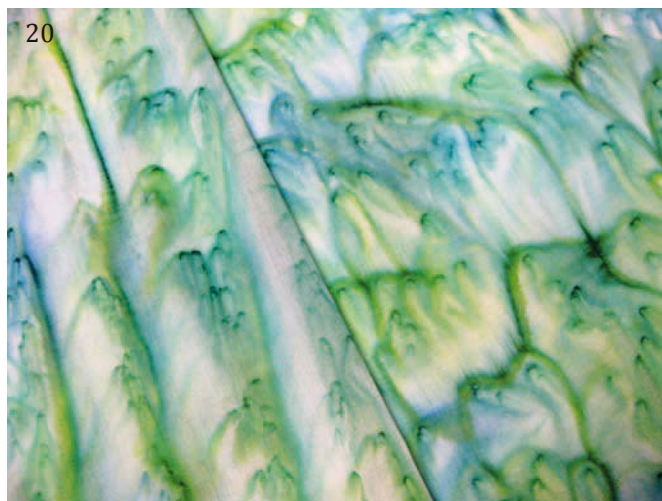
Simple Silk Scarves:

(photo 23) On small items, apply the colours in much smaller blotches or large dots (photo 24). Blend by rolling the scarf, then spread, scrunch, and add salt or sugar as desired (photo 25). You can fold 16 or more thicknesses when working on silk.

Have fun hunting through the canisters in your pantry and see what you can find! Things that dissolve will give the best results for these colouring methods. Another time we'll look in there for pastas and rice, and peanut butter jars, and... who knows what else we can find! For now, happy salting and sugaring!!!

EDITOR'S NOTE

We have some "Facts when working with salts" from Anne on our Blog at: www.artwearpublications.com.au for your reference.





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- "Anne was so willing to share, and an amazing presenter."
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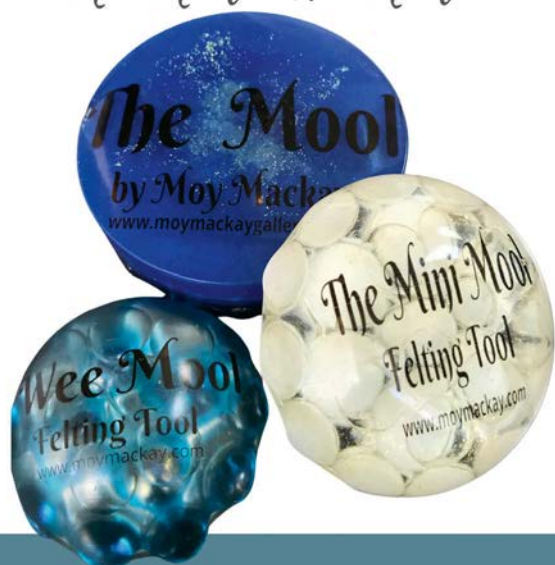
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(hand or machine).

DALE ROLLERSON

I love texture—it makes my work so much more interesting and I am always striving to add plenty—but not too much so that everything is lost. One special way I make textures in my work is to use my embellishing (needle felting) machine—you could hand needle felt if you haven't a machine, it will just take a wee bit longer.

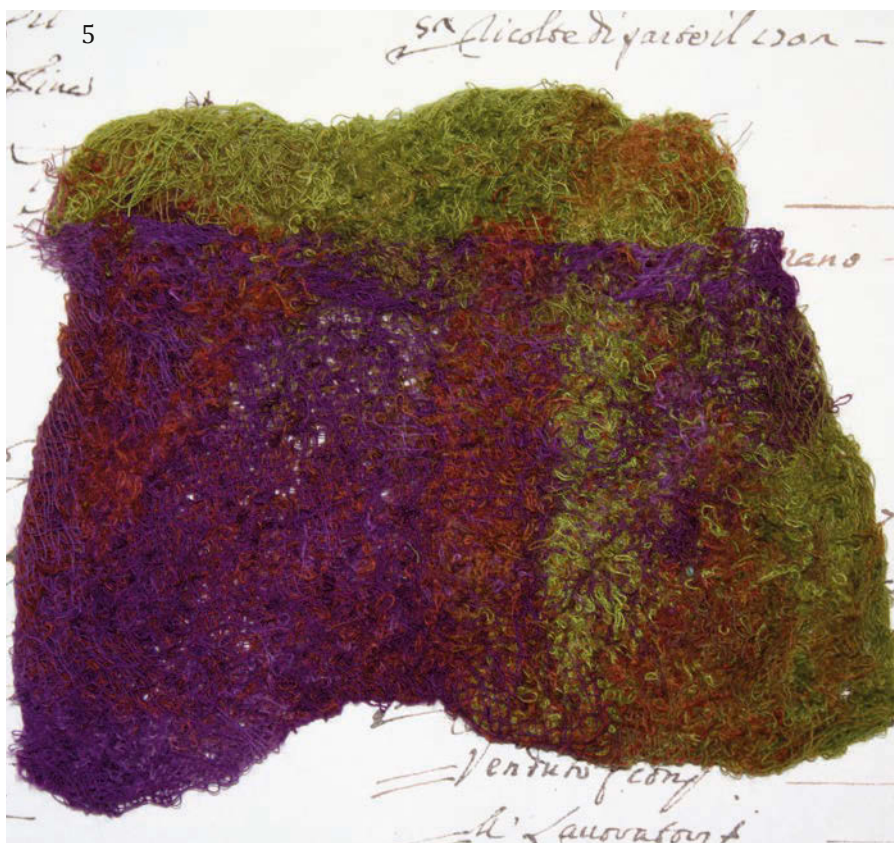
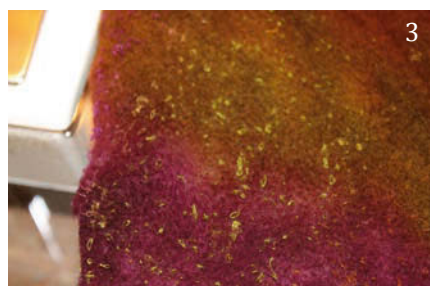
METHOD

Take a piece of hand-dyed prefelt and a piece of hand-dyed cotton scrim. Lay the scrim on top of the prefelt and run the embellishing needles over the surface working from the scrim side only. Work away for as long as you like, pushing the scrim through the prefelt (photos 1 & 2).

Turn your work over and see the texture starting to appear on the other side (photo 3).

Keep going until you are happy with what you see. Contrasting colours will show up more significantly, but you should have lots of interesting texture appearing on the other side.

Take some cut-off-the-edges scraps of cotton scrim, pile them up and, working from one side only, run these under the embellishing needles. This will give you a very raggedy-textured piece you can use in your work (photos 4 & 5). Don't throw any scraps away because you can always pile them up and use them.



When you are happy with your background piece you are ready to stitch on the surface.

Gather all the threads you have which you think might work—you want thick and thin, cotton, silk, rayon, metallic because these will give you different textures (photo 6). I have collected all my favourites, especially variegated ones.



7



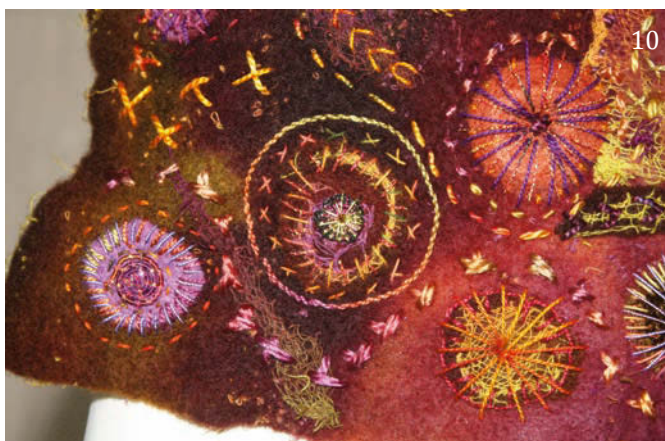
8



9



10



11



I have also added small circles of velvet and sewed on some flower stitch shapes which I previously stitched on kunin felt and burnt out with my soldering iron. (See photos 7 to 11)

You will see that I have used the circle shape as my focus (photo 12)—there

is something friendly about circles. I have kept it simple, but feel free to choose your own favourite shape.

Position your bits and pieces and use all sorts of different threads (photo 6) to attach them. I often stitch with thick threads first and

layer fine on the top. I have couched down gimp with a metallic thread. I have used the simplest of stitches: running stitch, straight stitch, chain stitch, cross stitch, buttonhole stitch. My aim is to create lots of interest. Nothing is actually planned. I simply stitch as I go.



Stop when you are happy with what you see. There are no rules—I just tried to cover up as much as I could.

I have joined my piece in a circle

and used a second piece cut in a circle for the base. On the base I have couched down some gimp with a

lovely metallic thread. It's only visible when you look inside the bowl (photo 13).

Stand back and admire.

Introduction to Design Elements and Principles

A General Overview

PENNY EAMER

First, we need to note that design **elements** and design **principles** *are not the same thing*. **Design elements** are powerful forces and are the simple building blocks of all designs. **Design principles** are ‘immutable, natural laws’ that govern the way in which the elements should be combined *in order to achieve a specific effect*.

As an analogy let’s look at making a pot: Clays, slips, glazes and heat are the *elements* of pottery vessels, but the many *ways* these elements are mixed, worked, thrown, coiled or moulded, decorated and then fired, are the *principles* used to produce a good pot. Get one or any combination of those wrong and your pot may be a total or partial failure.

Both design elements and principles are universal, and they apply to all ‘space and time’ art forms. In the visual arts, *space, shape and colour intervals* are the same as musical *time and pitch intervals—a musical chord*. In art the form is visual, in music it is aural and in ballet it is both.

Subconscious recognition of these elements and principles are deeply imbedded within the fundamental pattern of human behaviour. They speak directly to our primary instincts. We intuitively recognise them and react accordingly—although we are mostly unaware of the fact. They create art structure and aesthetic order, and are evident not only within *all* the arts, but in the very nature of life itself. They are a plan of organisation and an unchangeable ‘law’ of life

If we wish to develop our skills and have a semblance of control over our work; we need to discover exactly what these elements are, for only then can we begin to understand and learn to use this valuable knowledge. What follows is an **overview of design elements only**; the *very start* of a learning curve—for those who wish to go there. The rest of the curve can follow later. Every journey starts with a few small steps.

You may ask why understanding these elements is so important, but is that not what art is about? The constant striving to produce the elusive masterpiece, the frustration that keeps you striving for the next and ‘better’ work, the challenge and the corresponding sense of achievement? As artists we are driven to create for a reason; we crave learning, new techniques, new ideas, new input and so forth.

Each work is a journey—we often have no idea where we are heading, we just know we have to go. We have faith and rely on our intuition—but *hey*, a signpost along the way can make it so much easier and help ensure success. It can reassure, solve problems and generally make the journey far more enjoyable. It can get you to a destination rather than wandering in a maze or lost in a desert. It can build your confidence and take you on new journeys to places you never dreamed you could go and finally, it can vastly improve the resulting work. So, let’s take that first step.

THERE ARE 7 DESIGN ELEMENTS:

1. Line
2. Direction
3. Shape
4. Size
5. Texture
6. Colour
7. Value

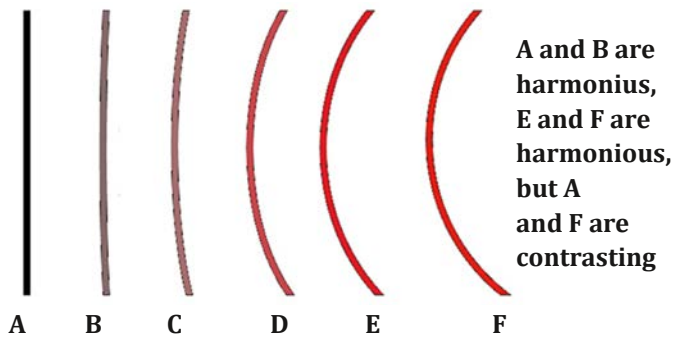
In this article we will look at 1 to 5.

1. LINE: Without lines there are no shapes, for lines define shape, and because of their simplicity and variety they are difficult to define themselves. Each line has an expressive character and is used as a symbol, a fact used so well by Japanese master artists. Lines can be a row of points which the eye will connect visually; these can be obvious or very subtle and are common in all types of art. Horizontal lines suggest calm, balance and stability, while verticals suggest rigidity, firmness and erectness. Oblique lines can be dynamic and suggest motion, stress, action and agitation. They can be *straight or curved, long or short, simple or complex, dark or light, thick or thin, formal or informal, gay or ponderous, light or heavy, flat or 3-dimensional, hesitant or forceful, passive or active*—all easy to understand... but they can also be *harmonious or contrasting*. How? It’s so simple that you already know, although you may not have thought of it quite this way before.

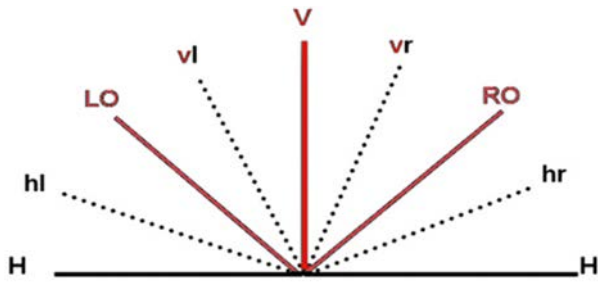
See Diagram 1: Let’s use straight and curved lines to see the contrasts and the harmonies. A and B are harmonious, E and F are as well, but A and F are contrasting.

2. DIRECTION: Adjacent lines such as V and vr or LO and hl are harmonious, but lines at 90 degrees to each other, like H and V or vr and hl, are contrasting. **See Diagram 2.**

1. STRAIGHT OR CURVED



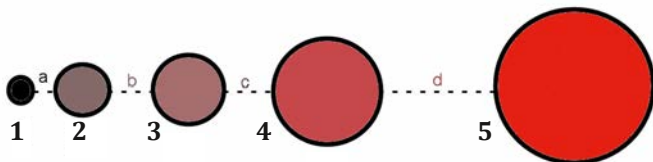
2. HARMONY OR CONTRAST OF DIRECTION



H= horizontal V=vertical LO=left oblique RO=right oblique

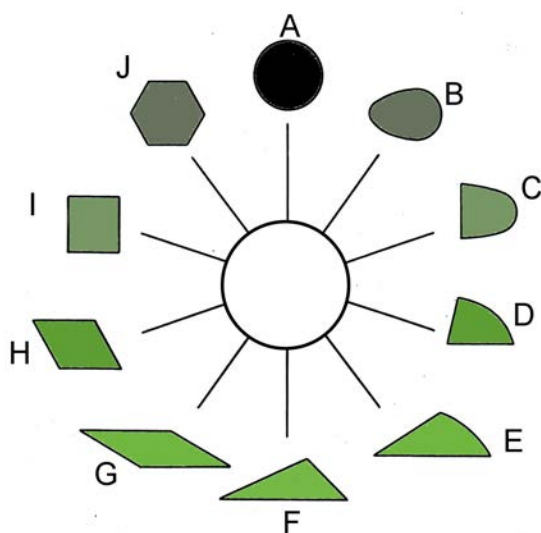
Adjacent lines such as V and vr or LO and hl are harmonious (or similar) but lines at 90 degrees to each other like H and V or vr and hl are contrasting (or complimentary)

3. SHAPE



Shapes/Lines and spaces between them can be contrasting or harmonious

4. THE SHAPE WHEEL



Just as with the colour wheel, opposites on the shape wheel are contrasting (complimentary) - A and F or I and D and adjacent shares are harmonious - J and A or G and F

3. SHAPE: You are no doubt familiar with the colour wheel, but there are other wheels, such as the shape wheel shown in **Diagram 3**. A and F or I and D are contrasts, but adjacent shapes like J and A or G and F are harmonious.

4. SIZE: Size too can be harmonious or contrasting. Not only the size of shapes (or lines), but also the *space intervals* between them—it never stops does it?—but then, after all, it should not surprise us as we live in a body, an environment and a universe that is both harmonious and contrasting... it's all made to a balanced, exact plan... what a pity we abuse ourselves and our little planet so. **See Diagram 4**

The spaces *between* objects are, although not drawn in, very definitely *visually* there and are as important as the ones you can clearly see. Shape 1 and shape 2 are harmonious and so are their spaces, whereas shape 1 and shape 5 (and their spaces) are contrasting. Shape 3 and 4 are harmonious and so forth.

5. TEXTURE: Texture doesn't need a diagram as we are all familiar with contrast (and harmony) in textures ... very rough (like hessian) as opposed to very smooth (like shiny satin) ... it's something most textile artists use constantly. We also use harmony: for example, average cotton quilt/patchwork fabrics, regardless of colour and pattern, have uniform surfaces. Art quilts on the other hand may utilise texture as well.

Have a good look at other artists' works. Try to work out why they are good or not so good. What is there and what is missing?

All of the above is very simple and may leave you wondering why you need to know it... well contrast, harmony, repetition and so forth are what make works either dynamic or static, so it makes sense to use as many 'illusions' as the work needs. It's the combination of all these small things (and more) that creates the mood and governs the success or failure of any work.

For example: if you want absolute, maximum contrast you need to use all of the above. You need to know how to get subtle contrast if that's what you want, or maximum harmony. Do be aware, however, that 100% contrast can be jarring and 100% harmony can be boring—remember variety is also a requirement for a good image! Everything in the right amount and place! There is of course a *lot more* to line than I have written here, but this will do to start with.

To practice, try creating something small that you know has some of the contrasts and harmonies that I have outlined and be conscious of how you use them as you work.

A few small steps to start your journey... watch you don't trip over them as you go—and remember intuition will, if you allow it, do most of this automatically, so relax and trust it!

Bon voyage!

ARTIST PROFILE:

Margaret Ford

*There are so many colours
in the rainbow and I see
every one (2020)*



MARGARET FORD

Like many of us, I loved making things as a child. My creations were predominantly functional. First dolls' clothes, followed as a teenager by my own clothes. Back then, before fast fashion was a thing, clothes from a shop were unaffordable by uni students!

Then, while working full-time I dabbled in quilting and embroidery, but again I mainly made things with practical applications—baby quilts, bags for the tooth fairy, library bags,

painting smocks, recital costumes.... Now retired, I still think purpose is important, but I no longer define it only as practical. Purpose and context convey meaning. To me, meaning is of the essence. My intention is to convey an idea; evoke a memory; or get a response; ideally all three!

I don't design by drawing. I can't draw. Instead I write prose. In writing I hope to clarify the context of a piece and to identify potential elements. This leads, when it works, to identifying appropriate technique(s).

For example: In 2012 I made *I Wish You Wings* for my grandson. The design process began with me writing a letter to him that I never sent. I referred to his love of James Patterson's *Maximum Ride* books about kids with wings.

"Grandma, I wish I had wings!"

As I wrote down all of the things that I wished for him, I realised that the various little "treasures" he had given me as a toddler in some way represented these aspirations. Seeds represent fertility. Money (20 cents) represents a wish that he has enough



My Family Tree, detail



My Family Tree, detail



I Wish You Wings



I Wish You Wings, detail



Bathing Pavilion

to meet his needs, but not enough to skew his morality. A maze represents the life challenges he will have to navigate, while an apple segment signifies a wish for his health. The shells he gave me each time we went to the beach stand for his love of swimming. It seemed appropriate for a feather to be a key motif and for the fragility of hopes and dreams to be represented by a double layer of hand-woven silk organza. Finally, bringing together reading, writing and research, I based the title of the piece on a lyric from the song **Find Your Wings** by Mark Harris:

*“So let my love give you roots
And help you find your wings”*

I don't restrict myself to one technique. They all have their uses. It's important to me to select an appropriate medium for telling the story; one that is subordinate to the message yet subtly enhances it. I often find that I am least satisfied with a piece when the technique hits me before the meaning of the work does. The technique must be appropriate for the narrative and well executed or it is a distraction to the viewer.

Environmental messages seem to invite the use of natural materials. While not a recycling zealot, I do find it satisfying to use old clothing and napery, and to print and colour them with windfall leaves and natural dyes when I want to draw attention to the importance of our forests and parks.

MELD Growth; Canopy; Forest secrets; and Plants and Stitched (below) and **Bound Windfall Wrap** (far right) are examples.



MELD 2014 Nine Leaves, right, and above, one leaf in detail

I taught myself to crochet as a child in about 1959 when **Woman's Day** magazine devoted several pages to the various stitches, and I became “hooked”. [On that note, we are so lucky to have the high-quality textile magazines published in Australia today. My appreciation of the potential of textiles as art blossomed when Janet de Boer's **Textile Fibre Forum** (now in the Artwear Publications' stable) began.]

About ten years ago I again picked up a crochet hook, this time with the intention of making textile art. I have been inspired by artists such as Queensland's Prudence Mapstone and WA's Mikaela Castledine to explore crochet's use in three-dimensional pieces.

Two things stand out for me about crochet as a medium. The first is its usefulness in creating something that has visual impact at both macro and micro levels. At a distance one should be able to appreciate, and be drawn to, the overall form of a work; its lines, textures, shapes and subject. Moving closer, the viewer should begin to see more in it, including the details of the workmanship, the embellishments, and the tiny subtle symbols that underpin the message. **My Family Tree** (pictured Inside Back Page) and **MELD 2014 Nine Leaves** (pictured above) are examples.

Crochet's second big advantage is that its fabric creates shadows when



MELD Growth; Canopy; Forest Secrets; and Plants and Stitched left, and in detail, **Forest Secrets** and **Plants**



partnered with shifts in light. Shadows are a great way to enhance the relationship between a piece and its context or location. Combinations of yarn in different weights and textures, together with stitch groupings of different density, give me a means for maximising shadow patterns. ***There are so many colours in the rainbow and I see every one (2020)*** (page 24) and ***MELD Bathing Pavilion*** (page 25) are examples. I can't so easily get that effect with fabric, although I have dreamt of one day making a large linen wall-hanging using hardanger!

I have been a member of the Western Australian Fibre and Textile Association (WAFTA) since arriving in Western Australia from the ACT in 2006 and joined its committee immediately (TIP: this is a wonderful way to make meaningful contact with like-minded people when new in town]. I was President from 2012 -2014 inclusive. I have received way more than I have contributed to WAFTA through inspirational meeting speakers; the constructive criticism of fellow members; and opportunities to exhibit in particular.

I am also a member of the Western Australian Quilters' Association (WAQA); Feltwest (the Feltmakers of Western Australia); and the Embroiderers' Guild of Western Australia.



Postcard Swap

TEXTURES

Marion Harvey (VIC)

Background: furnishing fabric. Feathers: owl feathers found in local reserve. Tendrils: cordyline leaf. Base: from vinyl diary cover. Copper coloured jewellery wire. Metal discs from old jewellery. Glass beads. Ribbon.



LYNDA WORTHINGTON

The “textures” theme really hit the spot with a lot of you out there! The diversity of the postcards is incredible. Six of your fantastic postcards are represented here. All the postcards received are up on our Facebook page from early March in an album for you to view and vote for your favourite. The postcard with the most “likes” at midnight on 31/03/21 will win \$100.00 to spend with one of our advertisers in this issue of *Embellish*—so please vote for your favourite!

In the next issue of *Embellish* we will showcase the Canada Postcard Swap. If you are interested in contributing to the swaps, please refer to my Editor’s Notes for more information, or drop me an email at lynda@artwearpublications.com.au.



Elizabeth Golden (NSW)

Art canvas painted with InkTense, as base for sanding mesh, lace, brads, cloth, sari scrap, sinamay, circular findings and resin.



Lyn Asher (VIC)
Textures: *Gone Swimming*



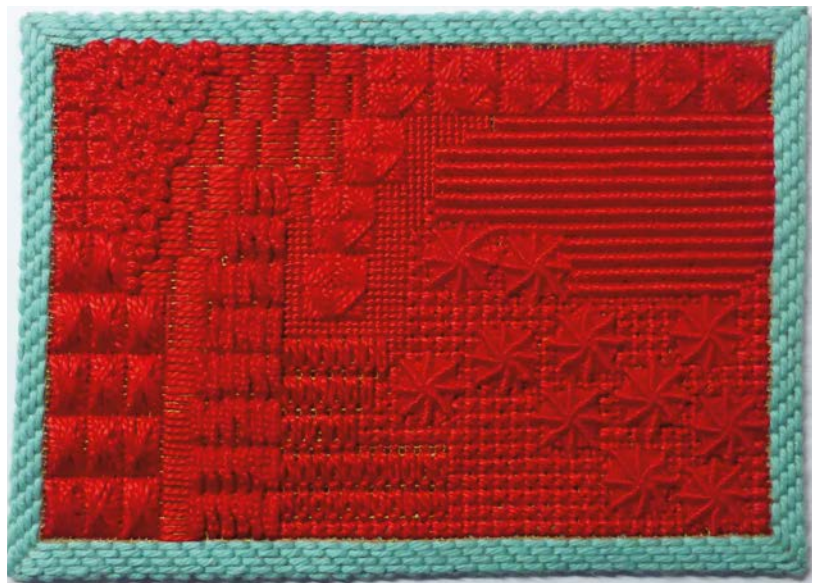
Margaret Tembo (VIC)

This postcard started with a printed fabric then asked the question: "what shall I use to give it texture?"
– wool tops, various colours and needle felted; fancy wool yarn felted; embroidery cottons stitched to enhance the design. The world is full of textures: fields, bush, jungle, flowers, trees, birds and animals have distinctive texture, a unique character of their own, rough or smooth, but always BEAUTIFUL.



Jan Rowe (WA)

The many, multicoloured layers of bark peeling from our gum trees have always begged to be depicted with textiles. Similarly, the shapes, colours and textures of decaying leaves provide inspiration. Snippets of yarn and synthetic fabrics were trapped under a sheer nylon layer before quilting. Slashing and singeing provided the texture. The leaves were made with snippets of fabric trapped between tulle and a nylon sheer. They also received a touch from the heat tool.



Wendy Seddon (VIC)

A few years ago, I did a course in canvas work. Part of the homework was to make a study of texture using as many different stitches as we wanted, but using only one colour and weight of thread. My postcard continues that theme using Perlé 5 and random embroidery and canvas work stitches on monocanvas.



Harakeke,
New
Zealand flax.
Northland,
2018



Right: Dried flax for paper
making with Jo Tito,
Gisborne, 2018

Flax head in full bloom, 2015



Postcard from:

Aotearoa

Sender: Carole Douglas

Right: Café sign. Northland, 2018

CAR
FR
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CO
MIL



Creative reuse, Tui cushion.
Gisborne, 2018

Following the Flax – the national

Driving down New Zealand's Northland roads around winding bends and over rolling hills, passing swamps, sandy beaches, small towns and tempting cafés, I am captivated by the majestic flax plant 'harakeke' that lines my route. Its graceful arching leaves and flower heads point upwards in dramatic contrast to the sky. It's a short summer in Aotearoa and by late January the plants are almost past flowering. But I like flax at this time of year. I'm drawn to the black seed pods that rattle in the breeze, and the remaining deep red flowers offering nectar to the birds.

I stop to photograph a tui

with its curved beak reaching into blooms, but I'm too late and it disappears in a flash of metallic blue and flicker of white. Instead, I contemplate the beauty of flax and its usefulness to New Zealand's Maori people for shelter, clothing, food gathering and decoration. I inhale its scent, shake a stalk and collect a few seeds to try for colour when I stop somewhere long enough. I place them in a small bag in the 'kete' (basket) I bought on the shores of the Hokianga Harbour. It's deftly woven and finished off with a paua shell. What better memento of the far north?

Finally reaching Auckland,



Guardians of the land. Gisborne, 2018



Kina, sea urchin cast glass. Todd Sheridan, 2018

fibre of Aotearoa

I leave the car and prepare for the next leg of the journey. This time I am (fully clothed) on the Naked Bus to Gisborne through the Waioeka Gorge that snakes alongside clear sparkling rivers through native bush and high country farmland. It's stunning, but it's Gisborne, on the East Coast, that I'm impatient to reach. Here I am welcomed into family and the genuine hospitality of Maori life.

One night I am privileged to attend a 'tangi' (funeral) for a friend of my host. I've not been on a Maori meeting place, marae, for many years and had all but forgotten the protocols, hospitality and deep reverence for people and place. On this misty afternoon, I, a stranger, am embraced with warmth and led



Flax 'kete'. Artist unknown. Rawene, 2018

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Kowhaiwhai, rafter panels. Gisborne, 2018



Detail contemporary flax costume. Gisborne, 2018



Painting **Pounamu** greenstone and flax. Old Post Office Gallery. Kawhia, 2018



Wherever there is land there is flax. Near Kawhia, 2018

into the meeting house, to pay respects to the deceased and to his family.

The meeting house, wharenui, is a communal building and is the most important one on any marae. Created to resemble the human body, the structure represents a particular ancestor of the tribe. I sit back and note the rafter panels above me. They are the ribs of the ancestor and are decorated with traditional Kowhaiwhai patterns that speak of birth, life and death through the colours white, red and black and the recurring shape of the 'koru', the symbol of unfolding life. Woven flax tukutuku panels are placed between the carved figures that support the roof. Their patterns are also a visual language and I realise that every surface is imbued with story. Flax is used widely in the wharenui, for panels, lashing and floor mats as well as food baskets.

A few whirlwind days in Gisborne's creative hub of galleries, museums and studios led me deep into this city's diverse arts. Artist Jo Tito, painter, fibre artist and seeker of traditional knowledge, makes paper using flax fibre and her partner, Todd Sheridan, is casting glass 'kina', sea urchin, pendants. It's a talisman of the ocean and I have to have one. I reluctantly farewell Gisborne and my host, old friend Papa Rau, and head by bus to Hamilton on my way to Kawhia, another hub of creative energy.

Community run gallery, The Old Post Office, overflows with creativity. Artist, Carole



Fibre reactive dyed 'kete' by Roz Goodlet. Kawhia, 2018

Shepherd and I chat about materials and the potential of local native plants for dyeing fibre. Carole introduces me to Kawhia artist Roz Goodlet, whose richly dyed flax baskets are beautifully crafted. I also purchase from Roz a hank of 'muka', the soft fibre extracted from flax leaves and used to make string and the fine yarn for the intricate finger weaving technique 'taniko' in Maori cloaks. Flax still plays a major role in traditional and contemporary Maori culture.

I reluctantly leave the beauty of Kawhia and depart to catch the Northern Explorer train down the spine of the north island. Destination Wellington—following flax all the way!

Join Carole's tours and, amongst other things, learn about flax and try your hand in Pacific Patterns—a journey into the multicultural life and arts of New Zealand.

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Fireworks





LYNDA WORTHINGTON

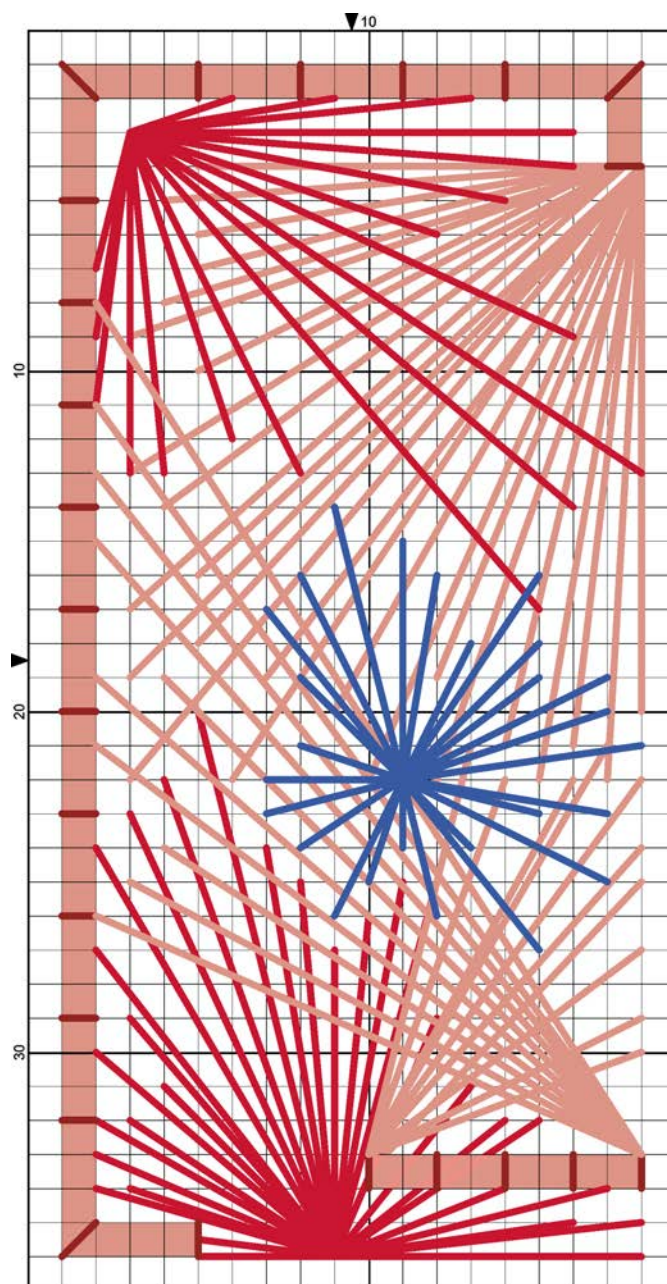
Here's another fun bit of textural art on pegboard (see Cross Stitch Cat on page 8)—yes, I purchased two sheets of metal pegboard to play with! The size is 900mm high by 450mm wide. This is 36 holes by 18 holes.

In this artwork I have played with different yarns, cords, diamanté strands, embroidery threads and a small wooden ring.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Watch out for threads at the back showing through holes to the front.
- I used an old laundry fold-away clothes drying rack (the sort that has an X shape when viewed from the side) to lay the pegboard on while I worked—make sure you don't tie your work to it accidentally underneath!
- The fireworks explosion lower left was the first to be put down. Around 5 threads of crewel embroidery wool, and a little gimp thread was used in each strand—held together at the ends with sticky tape so that I could get them through the holes.
- Next was the massive tube of twisted yarns which runs up the left, over the top and down to its explosion. This is doubled over and held at its lower end. More than one yarn went through some of the holes.
- The order of everything else can be seen via the diagram. However, it was too hard to show where I wove pieces over and under (this you can see on the final piece).
- The colourful fireworks explosion was made using embroidery threads which were French Knitted to bulk them up (all 6 strands of the stranded cottons used as one). These have the small wooden ring at their centre.

You *will* need someone else to help hold bits and pieces in place from the front while you tie them all off at the back—and at times a small piece of gaffer tape (very strong)—making sure things don't show through to the front. Cut all excess off from the back.



- I ran a thick gold cord in backstitch all around the edge of the piece to create a frame (this is not in the diagram, as it would have been too confusing to add it there).

Have some fun and experiment!



1: From *Embellish* issue 13.
2: From *Embellish* issue 17

Textures in

LYNDA WORTHINGTON

All objects have texture. They may have a rough texture. They may have a smooth texture. They may be somewhere in between or a combination of different textures. They may have a three-dimensional texture, or they could have a visual texture, or both.

Adding texture to your artwork can create an area of interest or contrast within your work. Using textures in your artworks may make the observer want to reach out and touch your artwork to investigate it further. When you are creating your designs, don't forget to consider the texture of the background medium you are using in your artwork.

By using highly textured areas in the foreground and smooth areas in the background, the impression of space and depth can be achieved. Tonal variation will also give depth to texture.

Embroidery is just one way to add texture to an artwork.

As we are celebrating textures this issue, I thought I would go down Memory Lane and look back through new eyes at some of the projects I have brought to readers of *Embellish* over the years.

My very first project for *Embellish* was a hand-embroidered panel for a box lid (photo 1). It had areas which were raised and 'busy' with

encrusted embroidery, and a quiet area of less texture meandering through the centre, giving the eye somewhere to rest.

The predominantly tone-on-tone embroidered wrist cuff shown in photo 2, made use of black textural lace with added black beads and black fabric roses for its background. The red of the embroidery stitches layered on top are a contrast and 'pop' to the foreground. Even the red trim has high texture. A trim of less texture would not look quite right. The large three-dimensional, smooth-textured red metal rose is the star of this cuff.

A case I made for my camera (photo 3) has a 'fluffy' texture



3



5

Embroidery

3: From *Embellish* issue 18

4: From *Embellish* issue 24

5: From *Embellish* issue 25

(needle felted) background into which seed stitches create further texture. A fairly smooth river of yarn meanders through the piece, taking the eye along with it. In the curves of the yarn sit accumulations of French knots (giving high texture) surrounding shisha mirrors (giving smooth, reflective texture).

Photo 4 shows my first foray into pin weaving. The colours moving across the piece create the design, but it is the different thicknesses of the yarns used that give the piece its high texture.

My moss-covered bark (photo 5), which I love creating as a base for other works, starts its life as a smooth base (created with bits



4



6



8



9



10



7

6: From *Embellish* 29; 8: From *Embellish* 38; 9: From *Embellish* 39; 10: from *Embellish* 41; 7: From *Embellish* 36;

and pieces of fabrics and yarns under a sheer fabric). This is then manipulated using stitching at the back of the work into the high relief 'hills and valleys' of bark. The addition of French knots both gives the impression of moss (and therefore that it really is a piece of bark you are looking at) and adds a further textural element.

The little embroidered brooch in photo 6 has a *very* busy texture—the combination of embroidery stitches was chosen to mimic the look of an encrusted marine rock. This time it is the smoothness of the frame of the brooch that gives contrast and a place of rest.

The background of the *Silk Circle* project (detail shown in photo 7) is quite smooth. The flat pieces of lace and fabrics are muted by the sheer fabric over the top. The meandering yarns are a little higher in relief than the background, and the meandering silk tops even higher again. However, the silk tops also seem to come towards you because of the shiny reflective look of the fibres—and being pure white helps this effect. Added texture and areas of interest were created using beads and French knots.

The first thing you notice in the *Penguin Chick* (photo 8) is the highly textured background—the

background is paper. Layers of sheers were built up to create the different shadings of the penguin, and in doing so added smooth areas on top of the textured background. Overall, however, it is still quite a highly textured artwork.

Traditional embroidery, such as that in photo 9, often forms patterns through texture. The use of gradients of colours in this piece also gives a visual texture and your mind sees weaving under and over of the different straps which in reality is not there.

Organic (photo 10) is the most highly textured of all the pieces here. It uses same fabric manipulation technique used to create the bark in photo 5, but in much higher relief. Beading and French knots were added (increasing texture), grouped together in specific areas so that other areas were left bare and smoother. My experimentation with crocheted organic forms added three-dimensional structures which in turn had their own textural patterns—one organic form had a higher texture than the others due to incorporation of beads into the yarn as it was crocheted.

There are infinite ways through which we can add (and subtract) texture when designing our artworks—these are just a few—and I for one am going to keep experimenting!

The Not-So-Wild 'Wild Woman' Project

...using a melted plastic texture sheet



PENNY EAMER

This is a two-part project: first you need to make a roughly A4 sized sheet of melted plastic texture and secondly, construct a 'wild woman' figure from that sheet. You need a heat gun (and a respirator) to make the sheet, otherwise you will have to find a substitute textured material to use for the figure.

After playing around melting packaging materials with a heat gun (and respirator), I decided to make a flat sheet that could be cut into any shape I liked and then turned into small projects. If the sheet is not too thick, it can be cut with scissors, a knife or a soldering iron.

I made the following items from my very first sheet and have since made a few more sheets to keep in my stash for use as and when required. I now scavenge for any plastic waste I find!

There are often shapes that present themselves, as in the case of the small trees in photo 1, which I cut out with the soldering iron and used on the front of a needle felt case.

Try looking at the finished sheets from all sides to (possibly) find things like dragons, figures, faces and so forth. You will find different plastics melt and warp in different ways and this also adds possibilities to the sheet.

Photos 1 and 2 (above) show a brooch, a needle case with a tree design and a small, not-so-wild 'wild woman'. She looks like she has fluffy slippers on... but never mind... you can't win them all!



TIP: Experiment with a range of 'shrinkable' materials—wear a good respirator, work in a well-ventilated area, and stay away from anything that smells too dreadful! It is a good idea to make more than one sheet so that the setting up is worth all the effort. Working outside is best—if you can. A 'dust only' respirator is not suitable; you need something finer, for possible toxic vapours etc. Under no circumstances do this without a respirator and never use any material marked or known to be toxic e.g. polystyrene. This advice applies when using a soldering iron and/or a heat gun.

This project creates a larger, not-so-wild 'wild woman'! (photo 3, right) The full metallic/ glitz quality does not, as usual, show up well in these photos, but the old gold, the sequins and the beads do all sparkle with colour and highlights in real life!



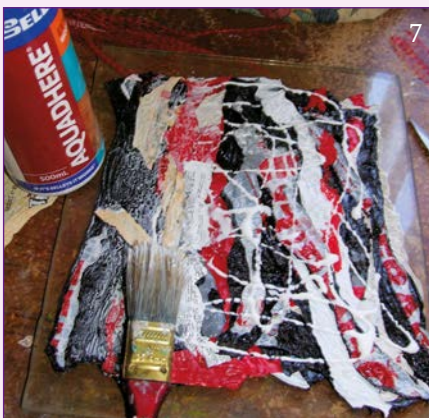


To make a flat sheet of texture, you need a smooth-edged sheet of glass or a large tile, and a small, heavy, heatproof, flat surface (e.g. a second tile), to put down on the hot plastic to make it cool flat. This needs to be light enough to hold in your 'non-heat gun hand' as you constantly need to lift it and put it down on the hot plastic. A small tile (or piece of same) is fine.

The secret is to turn one end of the plastic strips under the glass sheet to hold them in position and place something heavy on the other end so that they cannot move around too much, and then use the second piece on top to flatten the hot plastic while melting. The strips should not be stretched tight as they need room to shrink and texture, but they should not be allowed to curl and twist uncontrollably. This method ensures you get a flat, but still highly textured result. Do not make the sheet *too* thick or scissors may have a problem cutting it.

The finished sheets can be painted in any colour(s) you choose; but it may come as no surprise to regular readers, that I used my favourite old gold finish! Whatever colours you use, I do recommend using PVA glue and black or white gesso as a base. Plastics of course are not proven to be 'archival', so I cannot guarantee how long the materials will last. With that in mind, I do *not* knowingly use plastics marked as biodegradable. Unfortunately, there are still lots of non-biodegradable plastics to choose from and I look forward to the day (if ever) they are *all* biodegradable! I won't hold my breath, however.

So, when you are safely set up (photo 4), cut your plastics into strips (photo 5). Lay one end of all strips



under one side of the glass/tile and put something heavy on the other ends.

Use your heat gun to melt a small area and put the flat weight down quickly. It only takes a few seconds for it to flatten so you can work fairly fast. Once you have melted and flattened the whole sheet, check for any big holes you don't want and lay short strips to cover them. Turn the 'now stable' sheet over and melt or fill any places that need it. Trim off all unmelted ends (photo 6).

Paint the sheet all over with glue (photo 7) and then use the heat gun to dry the glue a little. It may bubble and that is fine. Apply one or two coats of gesso as required (photo 8). You can do both sides if you think they are both interesting... one side may turn out better than the other.

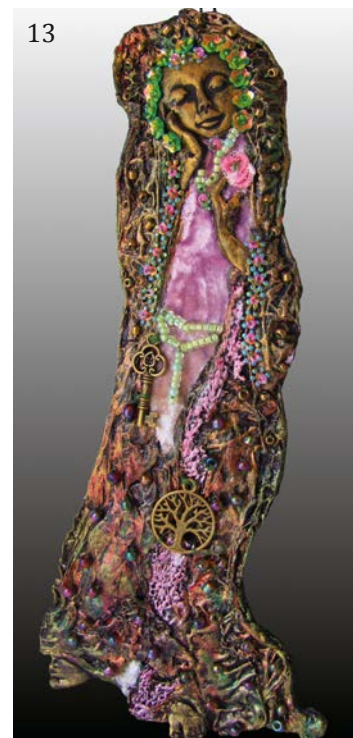
MATERIALS

For the Not-so-wild Wild Woman

A face, feet and hands
(if you have some, polymer clay
can be used to make these),
Beads, sequins, bits of velvet or
similar fabric and found objects,
Felt,
Backing card or timber,
Cord for hanging,
Acrylic paints if needed,
Scissors, PVA glue,
Sewing needles and thread,
Brushes and water pots.



Now apply a layer of metallic gold acrylic to the raised areas, but *don't* force it into the crevices. When dry, apply washes of acrylic inks, diluted as necessary, until you have the colour you like. Leave this to dry well (photo 9). You now have beautifully textured, but basically flat, sheet to use (photo 10).



TO MAKE the Not-so-wild 'Wild Woman'

First, examine your sheet and see if there is any area that would suit a flowing, gowned figure. Consider a headdress as well. These may be in one piece or you may need to cut them separately. Let the sheet's texture guide you and cut the shapes with the flow of the texture. Leave on any bits/shapes that you *may* use—you can always cut them off later. Remember, this is a fantasy figure, so anything goes within reason! I selected an area that included a headdress which meant I had to cut the face shape out of it (photo 11).

I cut out the shape (a soldering iron works well here) and, as I wanted the face (which I had already made) to be sunk into the piece, I cut out a hole to fit the face. I then made hands and feet from polymer clay (photo 12). After firing the hands and feet, I glued them into position with PVA glue and attaching a square of fabric at the back of the face hole, I glued the face in place.

Now you can decorate and embellish as you please. I added small pieces of velvet to two areas and used beads and sequins liberally. I covered the



More of Penny's work may be seen at
pennyeamer.crevado.com



area around the glued in face with sequins to hide the join and painted a small area of fine texture down the front of the gown with pink, pearly acrylic. I attached some 'Boho' gold bits and pieces and the Tree of Life covered a small hole I didn't want to show. All in all, I let the textured shape dictate the overall design (photo 13).

When finished, I glued the whole piece onto a double layer of mat board (cut to shape), inserting a short fine cord loop between the boards for hanging. I backed it all with shaped felt (photo 14).

To finish off the edges, I cut a very long strip of black felt (stiffened with diluted 1:4 PVA to water) approximately 0.5cm wide (or narrower as needed) and glued it around all the edges (photo 15). This not only neatened and concealed the

thickness of the texture, but also gave an attractive, fine, black line around the figure—which visually added to the finished look (photo 3).

The finished figure is about 23cm long and surprisingly, has substantial weight—although I've no idea what *that* comes from! Did you notice she's *not* wearing fluffy slippers?

This is quite a nice way to use plastic waste, not that it removes it from the planet of course, but merely postpones the 'throw away' time—hopefully until plastic waste can be turned into something less harmful... one can always hope! These little ladies are better hanging on people's walls than floating in the ocean. Even if you don't personally like glitzy ladies, make them for someone who does. The texture sheets have many uses—enjoy playing with them!

GALLERY:

Elizabeth Stanley

This stunning textural artwork by Elizabeth Stanley was a finalist in the **Australian Textile Art Award 2020**.

Each square centimetre of this artwork is filled with many components—some are *very* tiny (e.g. shaped sequins barely millimetres across). Elizabeth has cleverly built up the texture using machine and hand embroidery, chocolate wrappers (always an excuse to eat more chocolate so you get more wrappers!) and other embellishments.

Elizabeth explains, *The Jewel of the Ocean* was inspired by the jewel-like, dazzling display of algae on Bruny Island, Tasmania. The waves would only reveal the beauty for moments before it was gone again. I have tried to re-create the sumptuous texture using machine and hand embroidery.”

More of Elizabeth’s works, including videos of her in action creating, may be seen on her Instagram account: [elizabethstanley.textileartist](https://www.instagram.com/elizabethstanley.textileartist)



The Jewel of the Ocean (June 2019 – Jan 2020); 100 x 40 x 4.5cm

Materials and Techniques: Machine embroidery catches fragments of fabric including velvet and silk. Blended together with hand embroidery, French knots and detached chain stitch, chocolate wrappers scrunched up and burnt, bead and sequins added. Finally, slathers of dried paint are caught down as though algae is dripping into the ocean.



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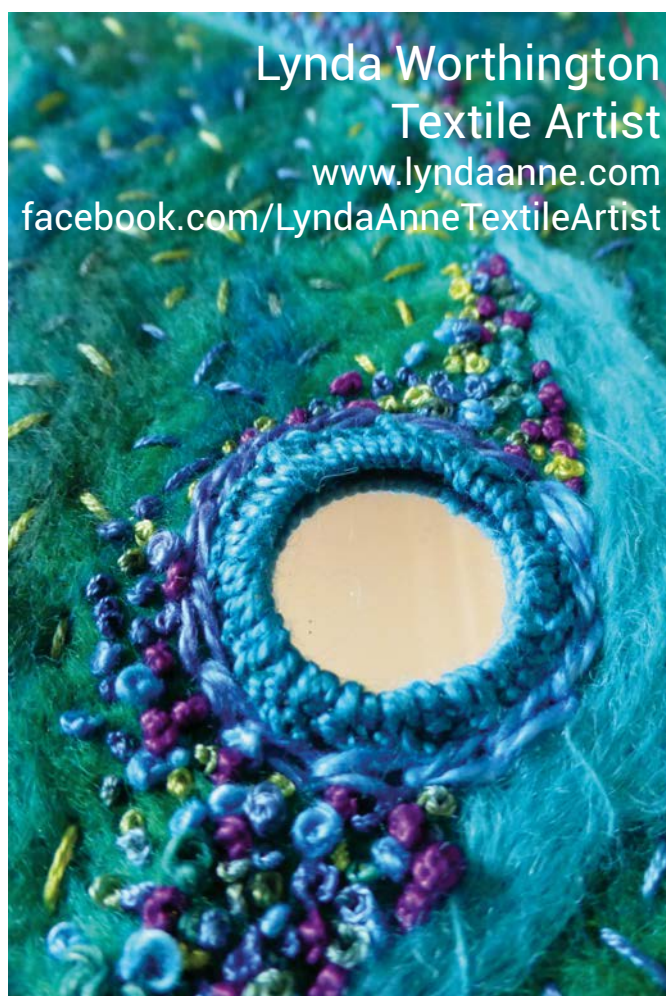
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1. One tenth of the truth! 2020



2. Filling the Conscious Cloth Company's shop shelves, 2020



3. Number plate from New Mexico, 1917



Lifting the Lid

...new inspirations from old

CAROLE DOUGLAS

When I made the major life move from Manly to the Central Coast of NSW two years ago, I carried with me the accumulation of a more than 40-year affair with textiles. I did not sort; I did not discard. I simply put off the day of reckoning and moved 120 plastic containers (and a few cartons) filled with past works, partly finished projects, experimental pieces and various yarns and cloth coloured, marked and printed with

a range of dyes and, of course, my Indian collection of textiles and clothing (photo 1). Added to this were the pieces I inherited from my maternal lineage—the embroidered tablecloths, tatting, knitting, and smocking of sentimental value. I am sure for many of you that this is an all-too-familiar scenario—it's the textile buff's conundrum.

Since the move, I have managed to reduce the number of containers. I have rearranged the elements,

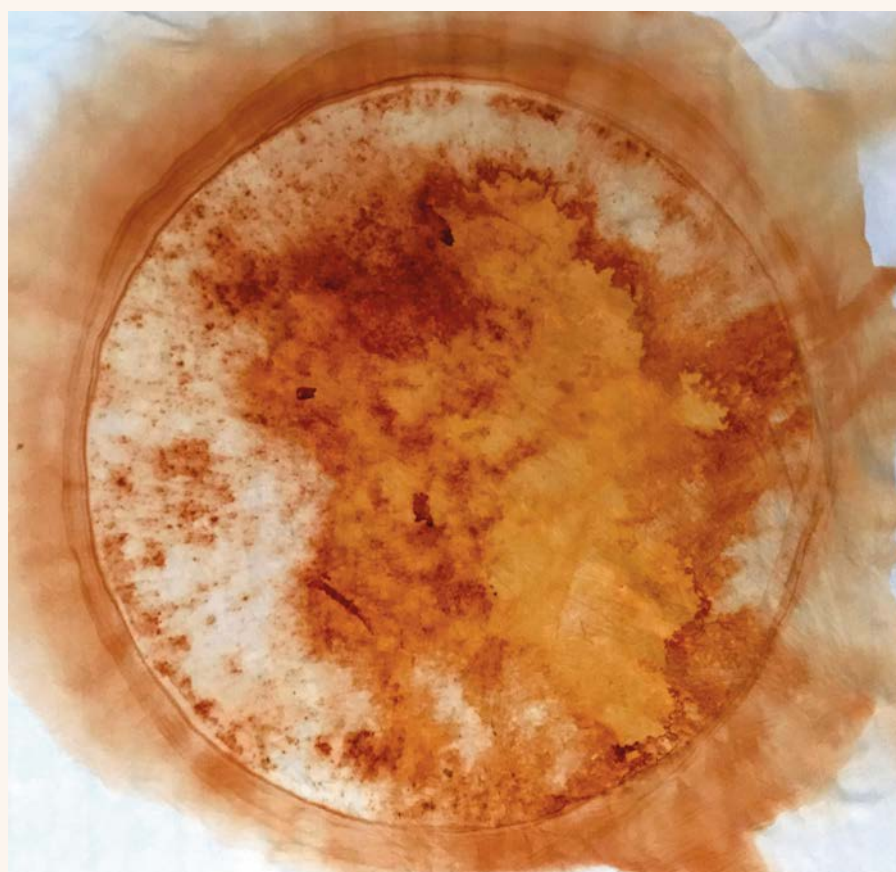
consigned miserably-failed experiments to the planet, happily given away the bits I know in my heart I will never use, and the Indian collection and clothing became the base stock for my weekend shop (photo 2). Apart from said stock, the remaining boxes hold more than enough materials to see me through the foreseeable. I'd already decided not to create from scratch but to create new work out of existing materials and equipment. I've planted many a good idea over



4. Carole Shepheard's table top. Rust transfer on cotton, 2018

the years and as the good book says, "there is a time to pluck up that which is planted."

The time has now come, and in recent days I have begun delving into the layers and plucking up contents that have not seen the light of day for some time. I was pleasantly surprised to rediscover the pieces of rusted fabric I made while travelling in readiness for later site-specific works. It's one of the easiest ways I know to carry a memory on cloth. In New Mexico I once picked up a number plate, the hotel gave me some old bed linen and overnight I had its permanent imprint (photo 3). In New Zealand I imprinted an old round table top in Carole Shepheard's garden (photo 4). I am yet to stitch the homage to our friendship. I have keys from Spain, horseshoes from India and a grand gecko from a friend's workshop in Brookvale.



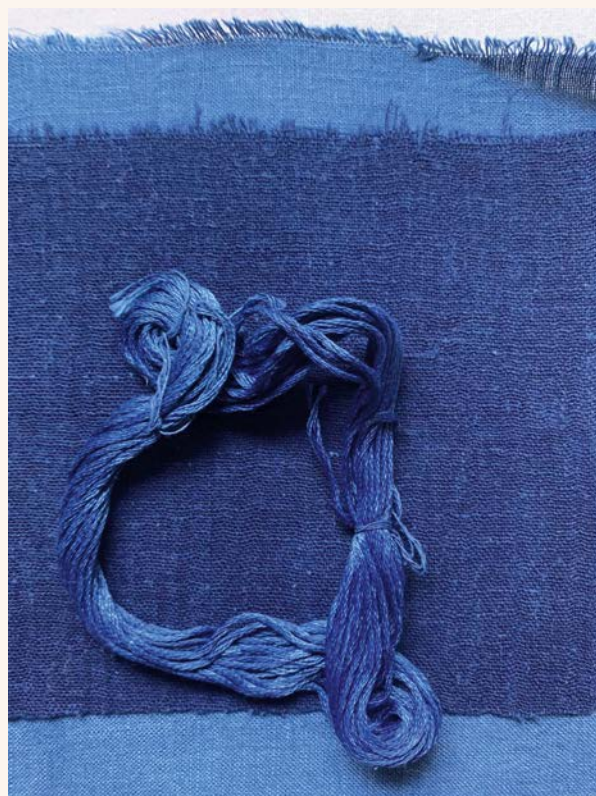
When I lifted the lid on a box of naturally-dyed fabrics, I was pleasantly overwhelmed by the heady, musky aroma emanating from a bundle of cloth I had dyed when I was in Nelson (New Zealand).

At the time flax was in full flower. This bountiful plant that grows from one end of Aotearoa to the other, was the inspiration for much of my early work and I sought to make a contact print of a flower head. Instead I have

a single ghostly barely discernable image and a range of warm brown and grey fabric pieces that emerged after boiling with the flower head and leaves (photo 5). There is an idea brewing ... (photo 6)



7. Madder with aluminium acetate on cotton, hemp and silk, 2016



8. Natural indigo, organic vat on cotton, hemp and silk, 2016

In the same box are dozens of natural dye samples—some from classes I have taught and others while on the move or in my own studio. There are samples of protein and vegetable fabrics and fibres carefully coloured with exotic dyes such as madder (photo 7), catechu, pomegranate and of course indigo (photo 8), and others utilising local materials such as eucalypts and fermented iron.

I fell in love again with rolls of cloth coloured with windfall gum leaves using copper, alum and iron as mordant (photo 9) and I can already see an artwork emerging.

The next container took me straight back to the zenith of my career. Torn between painting and textiles in my early years, wax resist on cloth bridged the gap and it is this that I return to time and time again. There is nothing like the aroma of molten beeswax, the feel of it moving across cloth and the consequent build up of wax and dye to create painterly images. Beeswax is such an ancient material—found in the tombs of Egypt, wrecked Viking ships, and

EDITOR'S NOTE:

*We will be following Carole lifting more lids and getting her inspired works under way in future issues of **Embellish**. I for one am really looking forward to seeing what she finds, the stories behind the pieces and what she creates with them, and going by the number of containers she has amassed, we are in for some wonderful inspiration over many issues!*

Roman ruins. It's a miracle substance that never goes 'off' and can be heated and reused many times.

Historically beeswax was used as an emollient for weather proofing leather and fabric (photos 10 and 11), for lost wax casting and for encaustic paintings such as found in the 3rd Century Roman Egyptian Fayum mummy portraits, and in fact, is still used for these purposes!

It's hard to discard the little pieces that were the seeds of ideas or were pure experimentation, and I am drawn to the idea of using encaustic to preserve fragments of old works. There is a congruency to the thought of encapsulating waxed cloth in wax and holding the memory, as Socrates claimed when he said that

a wax tablet is:

***"The gift of Memory,
the mother of the Muses,
and that whenever we wish to
remember anything we
see or hear or think of in our
own minds, we hold this wax
under the perceptions and
thoughts and imprint them
upon it, just as we make
impressions from seal rings;
and whatever is imprinted
we remember and know as
long as its image lasts..."***

As of now, many more boxes lie in wait, many more lids are to be lifted and more pieces are to come into the light—such as Field Notes – the anthropology of chai, a memory cloth from 2019 (photo 12) ... Ideas for new works begin to surface.



9. Top left: Windfall blue glum with various mordants. Mixed fibres, 2016

10. Top right: Experimenting with beeswax dipped cloth, 2018

11. Left: Manipulating waxed cloth, 2019

12. Below: Memory cloth. Field Notes - the anthropology of chai. Mixed media. 2019





SWTAFE Diploma of Visual Arts Student Collaboration 2020 - *Otway Dreaming*

As part of their 2020 studies, Diploma of Visual Art Colac (Textile) students were required to participate in a group collaborative project.

A collective exploration shared between groups of students involves a joint effort encompassing the importance of teamwork, communication skills, requiring a mix of interpersonal, problem solving and compromise, while working together towards a common goal.

Students were required to create an installation work responding to the theme: 'life'; the theme of this year's local Fibre Arts Event "CrossXpollination" to be installed

at Colac Otway Performing Arts & Cultural Centre. But like so many events in 2020 the event was cancelled, so an alternative location for the installation had to be found and the Glass Atrium space at SWTAFE Colac Campus was the outcome.

The students settled on creating a large-scale work responding to life in their own backyard, the beautiful and diverse flora and fauna ecosystems of the Otway ranges.

Students also had to work within the limitations of a design brief—Heavyweight Brown Kraft Paper was the only medium that could be used,

with the majority of the work to be constructed using paper cutting and construction techniques to allow for light to filter into the space.

The final artwork is made up of singular pieces worked on by each individual student, creating layers to form the forest floor, understory and canopy. Many hours were spent creating tube structures to signify the undulating forest floor, fungi, tree trunks and more, combining with a vast range of hanging flora and fauna elements cut from metres of brown paper, brought together as a whole in the final installation.

The participating students also





had the added challenge that due to COVID-19 much of this unit was delivered online, with students working remotely from home. They are to be applauded on their professionalism and creativity with what they were able to achieve, rising to every challenge, producing such an amazing installation.

Participating students:

Angela Baldwin
Heather Barker
Jenny Grenfell
Chrissy LoRicco
Janet McGaw
Jan Virgo

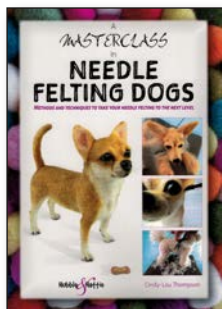
Teacher: Sue Ferrari

*Images courtesy of Chrissy LoRicco
Photography*

*CrossXpollination has since been re-invented as "CrossXpollination Adaptation" an online event which can be viewed at:
www.copacc.com.au/XpolAdapt*



A Masterclass in Needle Felting Dogs: methods and techniques to take your needle felting to the next level



Cindy-Lou Thompson
(Hubble & Hattie)

ISBN: 9781787113831

RRP: £14.99

www.hubbleandhattie.com

Cindy-Lou Thompson stumbled upon needle felting whilst recovering from a serious medical situation—needing something ‘arty’ to occupy her mind and hands. She taught herself through experimentation, practice and some failures, developing her own style and techniques. Her book encompasses her vast experience.

In Thompson’s words: “This book’s readership will be those who can confidently use a range of felting needles to felt core wool into any shape or form, and who want to move onto the next step of learning more detailed techniques and methods for creating more realistic needle felted dogs.”

Therefore, the section on getting started, tools and equipment, is fairly minimal. It does, however, describe and display the many and varied items Thompson employs in her felting and creating.

The book showcases four breeds of dog. Admittedly I was expecting more dog types, but... my goodness, the depth into which Thompson’s instructions go is phenomenal!

The first dog breed is the chihuahua. Techniques common to all within the book are covered in the chihuahua section and not repeated in the others. That being said, there are 46 steps, each clearly explained, and across these steps there are a total of 112 numbered and referenced accompanying photos (not counting an initial two of the very realistic result)! To see that number is quite amazing and it is so helpful to the reader to see the nuances in how to do each step—a true masterclass.

The other dog breeds are the dachshund, Yorkshire terrier, and poodle. At first glance, the finished dogs, including the chihuahua, look like a photo of the real animal has been included. No. Thompson’s dogs are ultra-realistic and full of character. The techniques and methods Thompson describes can be utilised in creating other dog breeds and other animal species.

Techniques and methods include: creating an armature; initial covering and bulking (adding volume) of core wool; how to create different poses; three methods of creating noses; two methods of creating eyes (one not covered anywhere else); how to prepare Merino tops for long coat attachment; two different methods of attaching Merino tops to create the effect of a long coat; how to texture the long coat; how to blend Merino colours to achieve many more shades and hues; how to add extra finishing colours; two different methods of creating nails for paws; how to create accessories (a bowl of food, a biscuit bone, and a collar and lead). This book by Thompson will help take your needle felting to a whole new level.

- Lynda Worthington

(Thanks to Hubble & Hattie, we have two copies of this wonderful book to give away! Please see the ad on this page.)

Competition!



We are delighted to bring you the chance to win a copy of **A Masterclass in Needle Felting Dogs** by Cindy-Lou Thompson! We have two to give away thanks to the generosity of Hubble & Hattie.

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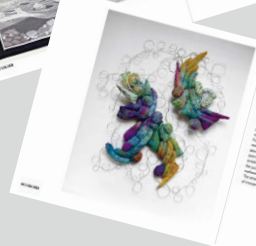
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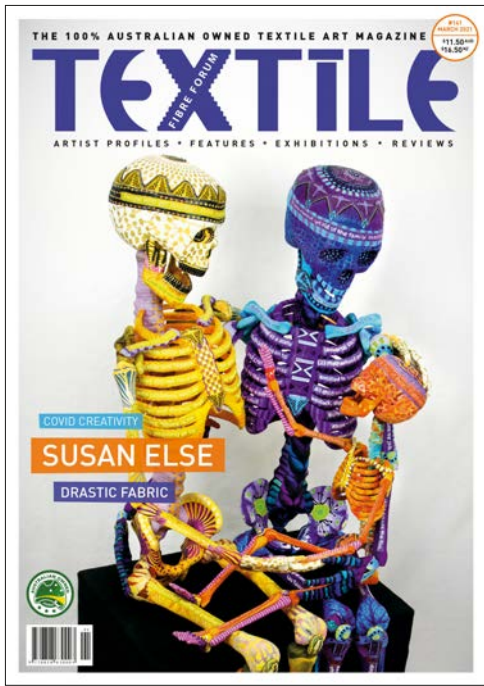
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See more of Margaret Ford on page 24

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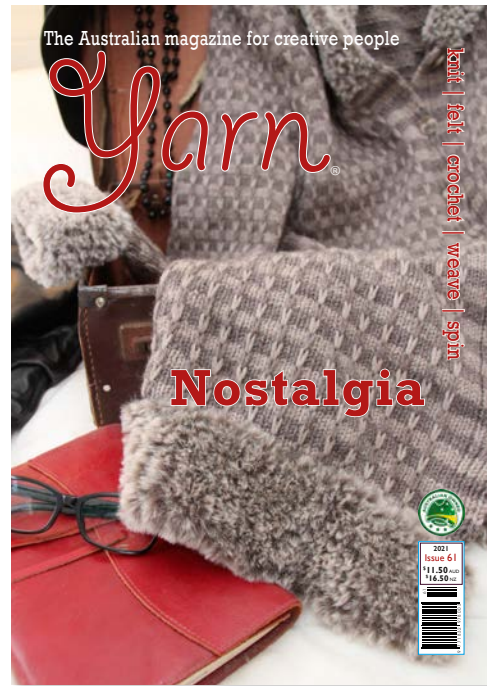
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An iconic textile art magazine which takes an in-depth look at artists, exhibitions, new techniques and innovations—with articles from specialist contributors in each issue.



VINTAGE MADE

Celebrates the love of all things vintage, such as fashion, crafts, and a return to a simpler way of living. It includes a mix of articles, tutorials, projects, recipes, tips—and in the way of a by-gone era, includes a pull-out pattern for a vintage-style garment. It is a visual and nostalgic feast for the reader, transporting them back into a different time, and giving them the means to partake in a little of that era.



YARN

Filled with many different techniques of playing with yarns and fibres, as well as instructional, inspirational, and just plain fun articles. You will find knitting, crochet, felting, spinning, weaving, travel and so much more in this magazine.



FELT

Each issue contains in-depth articles and inspiring artists profiles, exhibitions reviews, showcase articles, highly original 2D and 3D projects and technical articles, and more. Felt is aimed at felt makers and textile artists of all levels of experience who want to explore and expand the creative possibilities in this fascinating medium.