

# Exhibitions

## Knitting and Stitching Show Alexandra Palace, London 5-9 October 2016

There was a buzz and much discussion about this year's Knitting & Stitching Show at Alexandra Palace. It was generally agreed that compared to recent years, the exhibitions on display and the atmosphere around the halls reflected a great improvement.

### Anne Kelly 'Textile Nature'

It has definitely been Anne Kelly's year. With the release of her book 'Textile Nature' (reviewed in the June issue of WoW), her exhibitions, book signings, article for WoW and altruistic efforts for preserving bugs, it was fantastic to see her bring a little oasis of calm to the show with her exhibition. Anne even brought her garden shed to exhibit, beautifully decorated (of course).



What was so lovely about this exhibition was that it perfectly encapsulated the heart of the book. It is an all-encompassing exploration of the notion of nature within textile art. The artists in the book share Anne's love of the natural world and find creative ways to express it. This is exactly what we saw at the exhibition.



Anne's work could be seen alongside Suzette Smart (above left), Leisa Rich (above right), Gabi Mett (below middle), Meredith Woolnough (below left), Carol Naylor (below right) and current WoW contributor, Lesley Patterson-Marx (bottom of this page and top of page 3) to name a few. Workshop on the Web readers have an extra treat as Lesley provided a picture of the back of her miniature book. This is perfect for giving new ideas when working through Lesley's article on making matchbox books in this issue.

It was a joyous exhibition exuding good feeling and a love of nature.





### Marks and Stitch

Marks and Stitch's exhibition 'Impressions' reflected their interest in the natural world, ecology and travel. Greeting you as you entered was a dazzling array of vessels hovering over some of Alison Hulme's complex-printed cloth pinnies (below middle). Work from Catherine Fox's 'Shoreline Impression II' (detail below right) caught the eye with her layers of colour, line and texture and Caroline Bell's eco-printed wall hangings (below left) wowed us as they usually do.



### Alice Fox 'Findings'

Alice Fox's textile work is so enmeshed in the natural world that there was a stillness to the work in her 'Findings' exhibition. From the delicately stitched shells and seeds to the pebbles encapsulated in chalk and linen, the objects, stitching and textile pieces became one in natural harmony. This was a magical exhibition of small scale works and intricate detail.



### Alysn Midgelow-Marsden 'Permutations'

One of the high points of the K&S Show, Alysn Midgelow-Marsden, is missed as a regular presence now she is based in New Zealand but it seems to have enriched her work and created much to be excited about. In 'Permutations', a multi-media exhibition, we got a real sense of how her work is developing in new ways. Currently, a sense of environment is motivating Alysn's work and the experiences that make us who we are.



The abstract concepts of transformation, hidden and unseen, potentiality and change were tackled in this exhibition. Wall hangings, transparent layers, projections of pattern all featured and it was the use of materials and how they were treated that gave life to these concepts. There was great attention to detail and incredibly complex surfaces were created from metal lines and metal cloth which had been distorted then heated, twisted, entangled and stitched. The idea of a cocoon came across in that, given the conflict of these created surfaces, transformation and breaking out is an inevitable consequence.

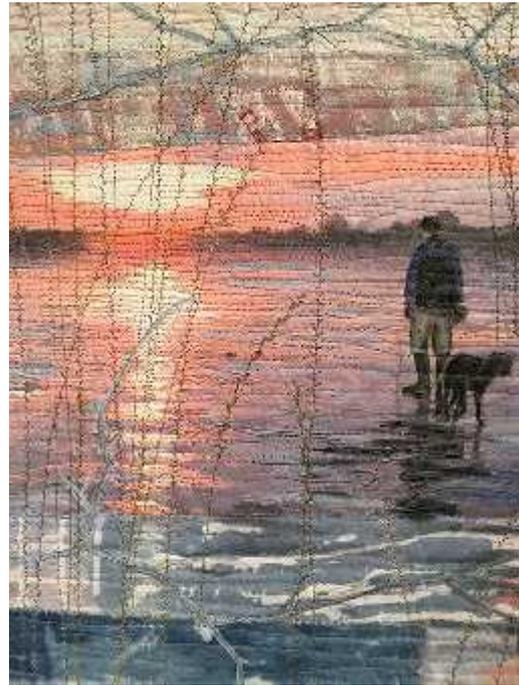


### Hilary Beattie 'Sanctuary'

Hilary's exhibition was based around the idea of Sanctuary and featured the major pieces from her new book 'Making it Personal, Book 2: Inspired by the Coast' (see Book Reviews in this issue).



Many different visual statements were here but the exhibition had a cohesive line, drawing it together.



We also have to point out how amazing Hilary's machine embroidery is in Elements I and II. Again, her book goes into great detail about how these panels were put together and the stitching was faultless. These pieces, 'A Perfect Day' (above right) and 'On the Edge' (detail, above left) are very interesting pieces to look at and admire. We review her book in Book Reviews in this issue.

### Debbie Lyddon 'Moments of Being'

The inspiration behind Debbie Lyddon's exhibition, 'Moments of Being', was derived from a Virginia Woolf essay about how some events can pass us by and be forgotten while others jump out at us and are remembered. These 'moments of being' for the artist were from a beach in Norfolk but have inspired some beautiful and unique work. Many exhibitions were nature-inspired but the interpretation of the subjects were thought-provoking such as 'Sluice Creek Cloth: Moon Rise'.

Debbie's Liminal Objects of salt-encrusted sea life were more grounded but marvellous pieces of work. The contrast between large and small pieces worked really well.



## Curious as an Object

This group focused on curiosity as a starting point and used shared experiences of the external environment to work through exploring individual responses and the process of working together as a group.



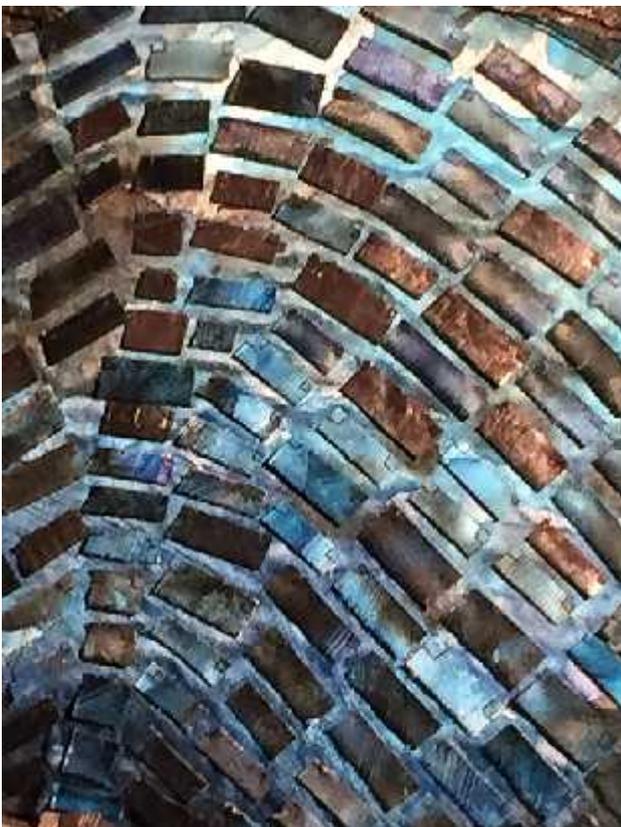
Mainly worked in muted and monochromatic tones, Christine Chester's 'Coastal Diary' (bottom) gave flashes of colour to draw us in, Christina Ellcock created some varied pieces in 'Coastal Notes' 1-25 (detail above left) and Sally Skaife's 'Small Oyster' 1-9 (above right) produced monochromatic studies of oysters.



## White Walker



Much was made of this huge project when it was unveiled earlier this year to coincide with the launch of HBO TV series 'Game of Thrones' Series 6. Shrouded by secrecy beforehand and project managed by Anthea Godfrey with the Embroiderers' Guild, Hand & Lock, Fine Cell Work and The Royal School of Needlework collaborating, this breathtaking piece of embroidery was on display at the show. You could get fairly close to see the extraordinary detail. The 'White Walker' is currently touring and you can find out more through the Embroiderers' Guild here [https://embroiderersguild.com/index.php?page\\_no=869](https://embroiderersguild.com/index.php?page_no=869)



## The Good Gallery Guide The Harbour Gallery, St Aubin, Jersey

This is the first in an occasional series looking at some of the wonderful galleries we have found. We would like this to be world-wide so if you know of a good one, tell us about it.

Maggie had an exhibition in September at The Harbour Gallery in Jersey. It is a wonderful resource, right on the harbour-side in St Aubin.

Exhibiting with the talented 'Diversity' group, she spent a week at the Gallery, giving an 'after-dinner' talk, enjoying sessions with local A-level art and textile students and running a 'have-a-go' session with members of the group.

Maggie showed work from her 'Long Diaries and Tall Tales' book. On this page you can see one of the narrative pieces, *Saved by the Peace Horse* (mixed media with calligraphy and silk printing).

Below are two pieces from the *Strippy Landscape* series. Based on sketchbooks of the Welsh countryside, they also use printing techniques with stitched inserts.



The Gallery, run by Pat Robson, is a wonderful place to visit. There is always something going on: superb art and crafts exhibits, a shop, DL's Deli and Café, serving delicious food, as well as the spacious main gallery which hosts ever-changing exhibitions of local artists together with invited artists from overseas.

The Gallery has an interesting history. It opened in 1998 when an organisation called 'Art-in-the-Frame' came into being. This was set up by two local art teachers (one of whom was Pat who is still at the helm of the Gallery). Its remit was to fight for exhibition space to show the work of local artists and craft people.



After four years of campaigning (and running exhibitions in any venue they could find), the organisation acquired The Harbour Gallery and it hasn't looked back. This aim has made it possible for groups such as Diversity to exhibit and embrace the opportunity to bring in artists such as Kim Thittichai and Anne Kelly to show work and share ideas.

The exhibition that Maggie joined was titled 'Openings' and this talented group found many ways to interpret the theme. Di Richardson's amazing costume, above with detail, was a showcase for her talented appliqué and goldwork. The detailed flower studies of Christine Westwood Davis, Orchid 5 (right), opened up the complex architecture of flowers in a beautiful way.



Ros Varrie explored an architectural theme, as you can see in this beautiful fragment, shown right. The strong lines are in perfect contrast to the fragmented aspects of the edges which fit the context so well.

The Gallery is dedicated to promoting all form of Island art and craft and have a special interest in enhancing the local school curriculum by exposing pupils to a wide range of international tutors. Many readers will have attended 'The Jersey Showcase' in St Aubin when the town was filled with visitors, all staying locally and all enjoying classes and talks from textile tutors, both local and from the UK. It was quite usual to witness a tutor, ironing board under arm, followed by her students, on their way to their classroom. Maggie visited several times as speaker, tutor and competition judge.

In 2015, a devastating fire in the boat-builders next door spread to the Gallery, which suffered such severe fire and water damage that it was feared that it could not re-open. However, it rose, phoenix-like, from its ashes with a new sense of purpose, improved space and a new deli and café area which serves the most appetising food in town.

Maggie loved her time in Jersey. Her new pieces, made especially for the exhibition theme of 'Openings', explored the physical aspects of the word.

One of these, *The Peace of the Evening Trees*, is shown right. Here, the opening forms a view of trees, shown behind text in a deep cut-out. Maggie is looking forward to more explorations on this theme.

If you find yourself in Jersey, The Harbour Gallery, St Aubin, is certainly one place that you won't want to miss.

