

Exhibitions

Five Exhibition Milton Keynes Library, Milton Keynes, UK. December 2016

Five is a group of textile artists who met whilst doing their City & Guilds Diploma in Stitched Textiles at Missenden Abbey. Jane Robinson, Suzanne Ball, Elaine Grahame, Cheryl Montgomery and Barbara Deacon all share a love of textiles and have continued their work with this exhibition based on textile traditions around the world and their interpretations.

The work on display demonstrated a variety of techniques, approaches and colour. Each artist brought their own personality to the exhibition and this resulted in a varied collection of work.

Cheryl Montgomery approached the theme from the viewpoint of being an American abroad and used her cultural roots as a basis for using precious remnants and reflecting on the theme of 'home'. Each artist produced luggage tags and Cheryl referenced the USA as being a nation of people populated both by immigrants and their descendants, as well as native Americans who were there first. It includes a quote from the inscription on the Statue of Liberty - "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore; Send those, tempest-tossed, to me". This piece resonates with recent events in the USA.

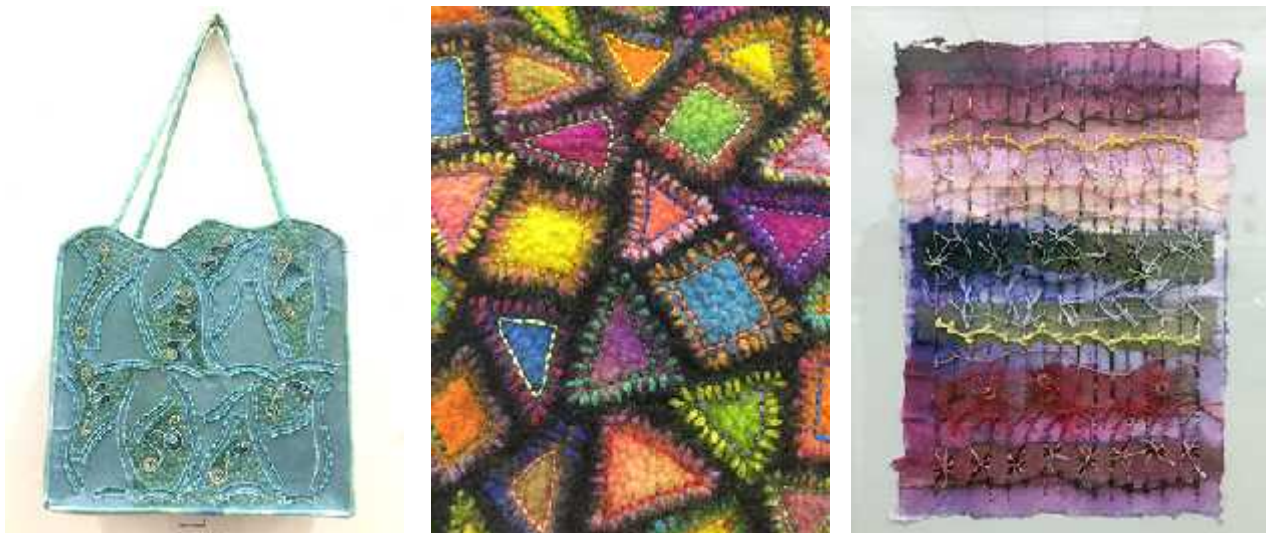


Other luggage labels were inspired by stitching from around the world with work by Barbara Deacon (below left), Elaine Grahame (below centre) and Suzanne Ball (below right).



There were also a variety of different types of textiles from wall-mounted pictures to wearable art, handbags, hangings and dimensional work.

Seen here, the Chinese Dragon Handbag by Elaine Grahame, Hand Felted Bag by Suzanne Ball (detail) and Barbara Deacon's Paper Strip Cloth.



It was Jane Robinson's work that sparked with colour and these pieces inspired by places such as India and Turkey reflected a bright and vibrant contemporary approach whilst still showing beautiful, traditional Goldwork techniques on silk.



The combination of traditional and modern is something we are highlighting in this issue of WoW with Anthea Godfrey as our Celebrity Interview and our feature on Hand & Lock.

Lucienne Day: Living Design
12 January - 21 March 2017
TheGallery, Arts University, Bournemouth, Dorset, UK

As many of you know, I love all things vintage, particularly those from the 1950s, so when Sam told me there was an exhibition of Lucienne Day's designs at Bournemouth University, I jumped at the chance to review it. I am a huge fan of Lucienne (and Robin Day) whose innovative textile designs are contemporary and influential, even today.

This year is the centenary celebration of Lucienne's birth and there are events being held all over the country (see News).

This exhibition, curated by Professor Emma Hunt and Dr Paula Day (Lucienne's daughter), makes the most of the large, open space TheGallery provides.

It traces her career through photographs with her Diploma from the Royal College of Art onto her breakthrough design, *Calyx*, produced for the 1951 Festival of Britain (photo, opposite (detail) and below). It goes on to show her prolific output with patterns for furnishing and dress fabric, table linen, carpets, wallpapers and ceramics through the 1950s and over the following two decades.



Following the success of *Calyx*, Lucienne was commissioned by Heal's to design up to six new furnishing fabrics each year and, over the next 25 years, created more than 70 designs including *Dandelion Clocks* (1953), *Spectators* (1953), *Graphica* (1953) and *Trio* (1954).

As well as pure abstracts, she often created stylised organic patterns incorporating motifs such as skeletal leaves, spindly stems, feathery seed heads and butterflies.



Above – left to right *Dandelion Clocks* (1953), *Magnetic* (1957) and *Flotilla* (1952).

Later in the 1950s, responding to new artistic trends such as abstract expressionism and the architectural fashion for floor-to-ceiling picture windows, Lucienne's designs for Heal's became more overtly painterly and much larger in scale. Dramatic full-width patterns, such as *Sequoia* (1959) and *Larch* (1961), both featuring trees, and rugged textural abstracts such as *Ducatoon* (1959) and *Cadenza* (1961), reflect a significant evolution in style.

During the 1960s, Lucienne adopted brighter colours and simpler forms of expression. She also designed textiles for Liberty's and British Celanese, whose acetate rayon fabrics were marketed by Sanderson during the mid 1950s. Her dress fabrics for Cavendish Textiles were sold through the John Lewis Partnership. She also designed tea towels and table linen along with carpets, wallpaper and tableware during this time.

In 1975, Lucienne Day decided to withdraw from industrial design.

Seeking a new outlet for her creativity, she developed a new art form: one-off silk mosaic wall hangings. Designed using graph paper, they were constructed from small strips or squares of dyed silk and hand-stitched together. Vibrantly coloured, these hangings – some abstract, others with stylised motifs such as signs of the zodiac – were exhibited during the 1980s and 1990s.

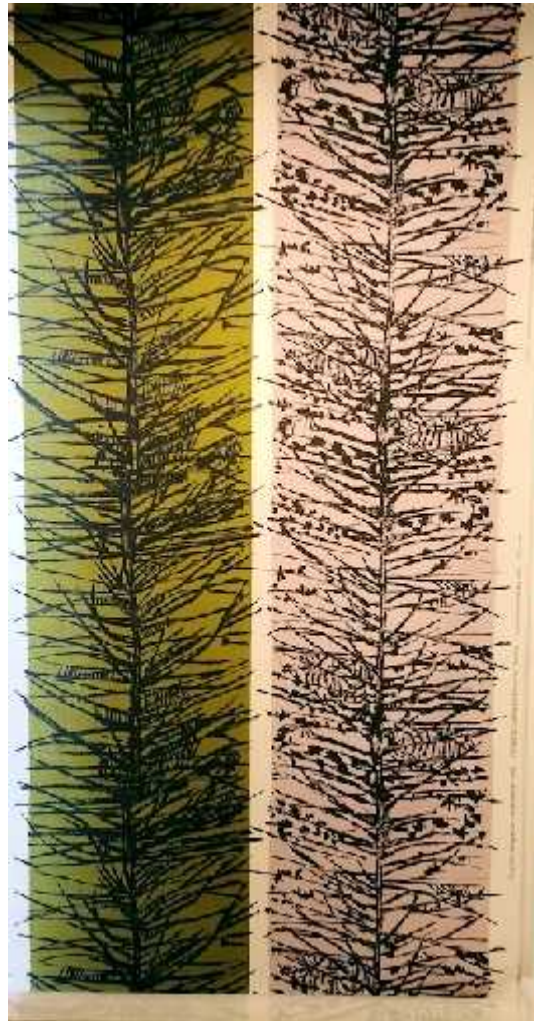
Many of Lucienne's iconic designs were on show at TheGallery, with large rolls of her beautifully designed fabrics, hung to best advantage.



Above detail – Dandelion Clocks (left) and Flotilla (right).



Above – detail, Trio (1954).



Above – *Spectators* (1953) (left) and *Larch* (1964) (right).

Her silk mosaics, produced from the 1970s onwards, were a revelation - beautiful pieces of work, all hand-stitched. The minute detail was breathtaking and the colours, so vibrant.

It was wonderful to view them up close and to see every tiny stitch.

*Opposite –
Three Daughters of Mexico Silk Mosaic*

I hope some of you have the opportunity to visit one of the centenary events and to see Lucienne's amazing work for yourselves. You won't be disappointed.

Fiona.

Exhibitions March 2017

