

NSW **craft**matters

the newsletter of craft nsw

ISSUE 2 - FEBRUARY 2010



Fibre of the Society

Visitors to Craft NSW recently could not have missed the explosion of colour - testament to the coming of summer and the large number of members working in the fibre arts.

This makes the gallery a good place to start if you are interested in any aspect of this fascinating medium - anything from garments, accessories and wallhangings to baskets and sculpture.

At last count, there were 37 members working in a variety of techniques and it's rare when there is not at least one fibre artist on duty.



You will find fine examples of embroidery, thread painting, handpainted silk, knitting, weaving, spinning, felting, nuno felting, dyeing, crocheting, shiburi, screenprinting, fabric collage, applique, devore, nanduti lace and basketry. Even our jewellers are knitting in silver!

In the next few pages, we will explore several of these techniques.



Craft Matters features informative snips, clips, tips and images about craft.

If you or your organisation have a craft event of any kind in NSW, an image or a craft story, submit it for free inclusion in future issues of **Craft Matters**.

Of course, your suggestions and feedback are always welcome. Please email your interest to newsletter@artsandcraftsnsw.com.au

The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW is a not-for-profit organisation, formed in 1906, among other things, to encourage and promote arts and crafts, encourage the use of Australian culture, materials and motif in work and design and provide opportunities for the exhibition and sale of work of members and others.

[Visit our website](#)



1. Jenny Hopper *nuno felting*
2. Helen Wilder *weaving*
3. Grace Levis *nuno felting*
4. Sandra Shaw *screen printing*
5. Lois Parish-Evans *thread painting*



Hand Painted Silk

Silk painting was lot more laborious 30 years ago - with traditional batik dyes, tjantings and molten wax.

A new range of silk dyes and cold resist, meant being able to paint directly onto the fabric with more control in applying the gutta (resist) - techniques combining the layering of colour with the painterly effects of the watercolourist, as well as drawing defined outlines to separate colours.

The quality and variety of plain and coloured water-based and solvent based



guttas has vastly increased, as have the different dyes.

Then, the debate of 'to steam or not to steam' has always been a factor in choosing dyes. Early fixative set dyes were comparatively dull, and steam set dyes were always stronger.

Now there's a great range of strong colours in all sorts of dyes. Not all 'dyes' are fibre-reactive; some colours are pigments only and remain in the fabric by literally staining one side of the material. A fibre-reactive dye penetrates colour to the material, so it is much more intense and luminous.

The availability of ready-to-paint silk has also vastly improved, including ready hemmed scarves and garments in all shapes and sizes.

Add to this the prevalence of digital technology: the digital camera, computer and colour printer. My photographs of things that inspire me can be instantly recorded, enhanced and printed - ready to make their way into my silk paintings.

Jane Hinde

Nuno Felting

NUNO FELTING, sometimes known as laminated felting, is a technique of melding loose fibre - usually wool fibre - into a sheer fabric - usually silk or cotton gauze. This results in a lightweight felt suitable for fine-garment making. It is stable and will not lose it's shape like normal felt would.

Nuno felting involves the manipulation of a minimum amount of wool fibre through a sheer base weave. Using hot water, soap and lots of agitation, rolling (several hundred times) and rubbing (all by hand), the wool is melded to the fabric base as it migrates through the fabric. As the wool shrinks, it takes the fabric with it, resulting in a crinkled, unique fabric.

Superb contemporary examples of nuno felting can be seen at Craft NSW.



Grace Levis *nuno felting*

1. Carolyn Cabena *silk devore*
2. Nan Crozier *weaving*
3. Jane Hinde *silk painting*
4. Grace Levis *nuno felting*

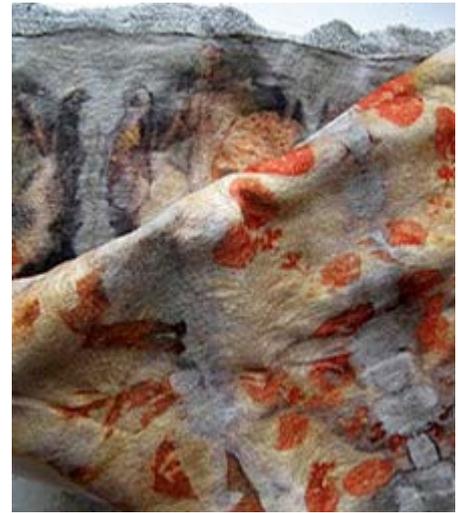


Bush Dyeing

Dyers have long used the natural plants surrounding them for the colours they provide, each nation with its own unique flora and therefore palette. Australia has some of the most unique botanical specimens in the world and is home to more than 1200 species and sub species of eucalypt. The colours derived from the eucalypt leaves have a special affinity with silk and particularly with wool.

There is no need for mordant with these substances, the pot it is heated in is often enough to influence the colour from each leaf. Mordants are often the most harmful component of any dyeing process and their elimination provides for a healthy and environmentally sustainable dyestuff.

Early pioneers learned to use the eucalypts for their colour but it is only in recent times that this unique quality of the leaf has been exploited. Artists are now using the leaf as a print. Colours from the oils of the plant are released through heat in to the fabric and are then colourfast. There is an infinite number of



factors that can influence the colours obtained from the eucalypt - the pH of the water, the origin of the leaf matter, time of year and quality of the growing season. Dyeing and printing from the eucalyptus leaves onto hand felted Australian merino allows a uniquely Australian art form to derive from the very landscape we inhabit.

Pam de Groot



Nanduti Lace

The name Nanduti (pronounced nyan-doo-tee) comes from the Guarani word for spider web. It is also the name given to the renowned Paraguayan needle-woven lace - imitating the appearance of a spider web.

This technique is characterised by its web-like structure - delicate, intricate, fragile yet durable. It is usually made on a small circular cushion and bears a resemblance to Tenerife lace.



Fine examples of this craft - by Isabel Correa - can be seen at Craft NSW.



Sally Hook. ceramic 'The Disillusioned Doova, a Story of Sibling Rivalry' Coastal ClayMakers Inc.

1. Pam de Groot *Eucalypt dyed fabric*
2. Pam de Groot *Eucalypt dyed fabric*
3. Greg Sugden *ceramic*
4. Penelope Wood *mixed media sculpture*

Why bother doing craft?

It is surprising that crafts still exist in this world of mass production and instant gratification. Machines can produce anything we need faster, cheaper and (dare we say it?) sometimes better than an artist/maker can. Why bother handmaking anything when you can walk into any mall or log on to the internet and buy it at a fraction of the price?

In this and future issues of Craftmatters we ask craft practitioners why they bother. If you are already practicing a craft, perhaps this will remind you why you are doing it. If you have yet to try a craft, perhaps this will encourage you to take the chance and jump.

Jim Walliss *basketmaker*

'My feeling is that the concept of creativeness and the concept of the healthy, self-actualizing, fully human person seem to be coming closer and closer together, and may perhaps turn out to be the same thing.'

Abraham Maslow

As a basketmaker I have the satisfaction of knowing that baskets cannot be produced by machines (yet). I find the craft of basketmaking very satisfying in many ways.

There is the challenge of finding local materials from the bush and gardens and selecting the correct weaving technique (often through trial and error) to create a basket or fibre sculpture.

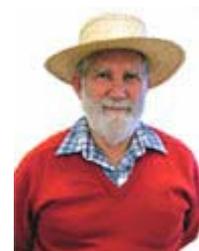
To learn techniques, I have participated in workshops with Aboriginal, Maori, Papuan, American and Australian weavers as well as researching in books, museums and the internet. To recreate past techniques such

as a Cabbage Tree Palm Hat or an Orcadian Chair gives me great satisfaction. To see the joy on pupils' faces when they create a basket in one of my classes motivates me to pass on as much knowledge as I can. I work in our backyard using a mesh enclosed barbecue area which gives me visual access to the going on of the wildlife which visits or inhabits the local gardens.

As I sit weaving I can meditate on the world's problems (without solving many) or listen to the activities around me.

Presently I have currawongs feeding a baby Channel Billed Cuckoo and wattle birds feeding a baby Koel. Both young dwarf their foster parents and are continually harassing them for food. I marvel how year after year the wattle birds and currawongs can be fooled into rearing the young of these parasitic birds who migrate here from Queensland. Little lizards scurry across the floor or a Blue Tongue will wander in. A very pleasant activity!

Jim Walliss



Jim Walliss 'sunflowers'

Editors Note: In 2009 Jim Walliss was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to the community, to the environment and to education.

Why bother doing craft?

Carolyn Delzoppo *cloisonne enameller*

Here is an excerpt from the keynote address I gave at the Enamel Symposium in Brisbane recently - about this very question. Why create?

I came across a book in the Mullumbimby library about this issue. The author Herman Vaske had been researching the same thing and approached 55 well known creative people from all countries, and asked them the deceptively simple question. Why do you create? The answers were very interesting, and there was a rough sort of consensus.

Many said that it's because that's who they are. They have no choice. They are driven to create. But my favourite response was from Lee Clow, an advertising art director - who said 'consider the alternative'.

'... the pre-requisite for the arts never seem to be a guarantee of an audience, or income. Artists are clearly not driven by mere monetary capital, but they are driven by another form of capital - creative and relational capital, the discovery of new ideas and thoughts and cultural geography.'

Makoto Fujimura



Carolyn Delzoppo 'In the Garden'

Consider not being able to create. For artistic people, it would be awful and I bet most of us would be unhappy. You, like me, probably need your creative fix at regular intervals to just keep feeling sane. People create because they must. I think it is a basic human need - to manifest things, to create beauty and express feelings.

Happiness itself has been defined as 'someone to love, something to look forward to, and something to do'. The benefits of being creative are intrinsic - and have nothing to do with income or status. It's something we do for it's own sake - and in these days of galloping materialism, that's a very fine thing.

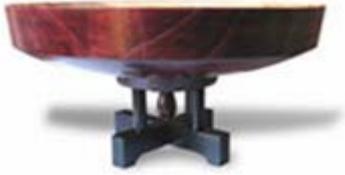
Creativity happens when we stop reacting to the outside world and enter a time of reflection. It has been said that boredom is a prelude to creativity, but I disagree with that. I think that there's an 'otherness' that is a prelude to creativity. There's a term that has been coined by an American psychologist - flow. It's a term that describes what happens if it's a good day in the workshop.

I used to call it 'It'. On any day 'It' was either present or 'It' was not present. The days when 'It' is there are kind of magical. Flow is defined as a state that we are in where we become so absorbed in what we are doing that we lose consciousness of self and time.

The presence of flow is what I believe makes the creative act so pleasurable. And it is not confined just to artists - it can happen at work, during leisure activities, gardening, in good conversation. This mysterious state has been also called 'the muse' in arts circles for a long time - the bestowing of creativity.

I think all artists chase that state of flow. I know that I do.

Carolyn Delzoppo



Neville Wostear, turned wood
Natalie Fong, Strathfield Girls High School,
wirework sculpture

YEAR OF THE TIGER - Bronze Black and White

An event associated with City of Sydney Chinese New Year Festival 2010. There is a programme of **craft demonstrations** during this exhibition. See website for more information.

Craft NSW is also exhibiting works from ArtExpress in The Rocks 2010, during this exhibition. **ArtExpress** is co-presented by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Office of the Board of Studies NSW and coordinated by The Arts Unit, Department of Education and Training.

When 2 February to 28 March 2010

Where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney.

Information www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



Rosanne Antico-Hall, enamel silver

NOT NAKED

Latest work in fibre, glass and jewellery by artists Grace Levis, Margaret Ramsey and Rosanne Antico-Hall.

When 30 March to 11 April 2010

Where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

Information www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



Jane Hinde, silk painting

WORLD OF COLOURS

The wonderfully coloured world of **handpainted silks by Jane Hinde**, **the ceramics of Heidi Francis**, **fine jewellery by Margaret Conway** and **the embroidery of Christine Molesworth**.

When 13 April to 25 April 2010

Where Craft NSW 104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000

Information www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au/exhibitions.htm



Ksenija Benko, Rosanne Antico-Hall, Valerie Aked, Carolyn Delzoppo, Robin Phillips

CRAFT WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS IN NSW

Designing Matters 2, February 21-21 2010, Tutor Alan Tremain

For workshop participants starting with Designing Matters 2 this workshop will be discussing their design work to date and venturing forward with the whole group fine tuning their colour and design skills and creating a new level of design profiles, cutting and sewing these new designs into quilt tops. For more information contact: [Quilters Guild of NSW Inc.](#)

Discover the Magic of Polymer Clay, February 27-28 2010, Tutor: Penny Eamer

Learn how to prepare, use and fire this exciting, relatively new material. Learn the simple basics required to make delightful, decorative and/or functional works. A hands-on workshop, participants will be given a choice of projects and will leave with unique items that will last for many years. A variety of decorative effects will be introduced. Acquire knowledge and experience needed to finish any work in progress and to undertake new works in the future. For more information contact: [Australian Textile and Surface Design Association Inc.](#)

Tips and Tricks for Sun Dye Techniques, February 8 2010, Tutor: Colleen Drew

The first Tips and Tricks day of the year will be working with sun dyes. These dyes provide an interesting way of introducing colour and design to paper. The liquid sun dyes are applied to wet paper and objects or stencils placed on the paper which is then put in the sun to dry. The exposed dyes set while those under the object or stencil retreat to the edges providing interesting shapes and textures. The combinations of shape and form are limited only by your imagination. Primrose will provide the dyes from the materials fee and any dyes left over will be shared between the participants, so bring some small containers. You should also bring paper (any kind), some brushes and foam applicators, stencils or objects to make the images, small disposable dishes to mix and dilute the dyes and a tray on which to rest the dyed paper while the image is being created. For more information contact: [Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre.](#)

Tips and Tricks Pulp Layered Landscapes, March 8, Tutor: Marie Waterhouse

Tapping into ideas derived from Jan Marinos' workshop at IAPMA, Marie Waterhouse will suggest some experiments with various techniques of layering coloured pulps, possibly, on to A4 or a larger base sheet comprised of several overlapping A4 sheets. (Each participant will work on their own creation). We will work with a variety of colours creating landscape-like or abstract designs, which will involve manipulating the pulp on the screen (by water cutting or hand dragging or multiple dipping) before layering them onto the base sheets and building up the image. For more information contact: [Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre.](#)

Armature Sculpture and Japanese Fibres, March 13-14 2010, Tutor: Gail Stiffe

Ethereal works will be produced on structures made from bamboo, cane and other materials. Two techniques for attaching papers to these structures will be covered in the course. The structures can be random and free form or may resemble practical forms such as baskets. Some time will be spent in preparing pre-cooked kozo for use on both structures. An introduction to Nagashizuki sheet formation will also be covered in the class with an opportunity to try this technique. For more information contact: [Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre.](#)

TUITION

Tutor	Craft	Email	Workshop Dates
Pam de Groot	Felting, beginner - advanced	pamdegroot.fibre@gmail.com	Please contact tutor direct
Jenny Hopper	Nuno felting and dyeing, beginner - advanced	jennyhopper@tsn.cc	Please contact tutor direct
Jude Skeers	Hand knitting - hats moebius etc.	judeskeers@hotmail.com	Please book via website www.black.com.au
Penel Bigg	Flamework beadmaking; Beadweaving with seed beads	firebird@gmail.com	Please contact the tutor direct
Sandra Shaw	Screenprinting Workshop at Lake Macquarie, 28 February 2010	sandra.shaw2@bigpond.com	Please contact the tutor direct

CONTACT US

The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW
104 George Street The Rocks Sydney 2000
p 61 2 9241 5825
f 61 2 9252 6255
Open 7 days, 9.30 to 5.30
www.artsandcraftsnsw.com.au

We welcome material you wish to submit for publication and appreciate your feedback, comments and suggestions. Please email: newsletter@artsandcraftsnsw.com.au

All the images and material in this newsletter is copyright © 1999-2010 to The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales and may not be reproduced without permission

Disclaimer: The information in Craft Matters is subject to change. Although we make every effort to ensure that the content at the time of publication is correct, we do not guarantee its accuracy. The Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW accepts no responsibility to you or anyone else arising from any use or reliance on the information contained in Craft Matters or any inaccuracy or lack of currency in the information.