

62 Group of Textile Artists

Conversations: People, Places, Materials, Objects.

The 62 Group of Textile Artists is an artist-led group with an international reputation for professionalism and high-quality work. Its aim is to question and challenge the boundaries of textile practice and to encourage a greater awareness of the art form. The membership is worldwide and consists of approximately 60 exhibiting members, both established artists and recent graduates.

This exhibition explores the working relationship that artists have with the world around them and investigates the creative dialogue that occurs between the artist/maker and the themes: people, place, materials, objects.

The writer Rebecca Solnit says, 'Conversation provokes response, not silence,' and 62 Group members have been vocal in their response to this theme. A conversation is, of course, about something and this brief has enabled the artists to create a dialogue with their own perceptions of the world to fully understand how the world actually is.

In this exhibition you will find conversations with people - actual, in the mind, in secret, or eavesdropped - which

express the relationships that humans have with each other, both in the past and in the present. You will also find the results of internal and external dialogues: what we think and deliberate on, and how what is chosen is shown to the world.

Materials and objects have been selected as a metaphor for thoughts and ideas, as a catalyst for conversation, as a reminder of past words, as an engagement with their materiality, and as a signifier of absence.

The way we notate exchange has also been considered, as alternative communication systems and mark-making represent letters, words and sentences.

The continuous and dynamic relationship we have with places, both urban and natural, has been explored as this association enables us to understand our place in the world – it speaks, and we listen.

Whatever the exchange and however it has been articulated, Conversations: People, Places, Materials, Objects has inspired 62 Group members to express their working relationship with the world around them with work that is diverse, ambitious and innovative.

CAPTIONS

Claire Barber

A stitch to every sound: St Barbe Art Gallery

This work consists of stitched responses to various listening locations at St Barbe Gallery. Using onsite sound recordings sourced from the gallery Claire immersed herself in the audio whilst sewing, experiencing how ambient and incidental sounds connect us to other people, materials, and objects within and beyond the gallery space.

Hand stitch into silk organza.

Caroline Bartlett

Metamorphosis I & II

This series started with investigating the work of Lucie Rie at Craft Study Centre, a process disrupted by the Pandemic, leading to reflection on the 'ecology' of practice as various factors interact to maintain stability in a makers' work or to promote change, to material, processes, concept.

Dyed, pleated linen - Cotton thread and Perspex

Heather Belcher

Breathe

This conversation is spoken through the language of dressmaking. Heather has copied her mother's teaching samples, a bound pocket, front and back. As it emerges, connections are made with the internal body, the lungs. Heather's mother, diagnosed with lung cancer, was later cared for here, in Lymington at Oakhaven Hospice.

Handmade felt - Wool, silk, cotton and stitch

Heather Belcher

Suture

In conversation with her daughter, the artist's mother passes on her skills, demonstrating how to stitch a bound pocket. Through this language of dressmaking and handmade felt, (which disturbingly resembles skin) Heather centres the work in the internal, abstract body, suturing together family histories.

Handmade felt – Wool, cotton and heat transfer print

Eszter Bornemisza

Ageless bond

This elderly couple is lost in endless conversation, clinging together, supporting, and loving each other unwaveringly. Their silhouette is laced with the map of Rome, the Eternal City. Lost in discussion they march through times of wars and battles, the names of which are written on the fields of their walks.

Sketch paper, mulberry paper, cotton, batting printed, dyed, handwritten, cut, machine sewn.

Lucy Brown

Reclaiming ones'...

In an attempt to reclaim herself, Lucy has woven her own lost hair into a vintage buckle to create her version of an English Victorian mourning hairwork object. As a material, human hair is loaded with personal and universal meaning. Lucy's internal dialogue transcends into the public domain.

Artists' hair, vintage buckle, dress fabric, velvet ribbon,
thread, pins

Hand woven; artists own technique, threaded, stitched,
knotted, pinned

Lucy Brown

As you left them

Knitting has a historic association with social gossip. Both Lucy's Nans knitted. Nanny Brough knitted incessantly, making many cardigans, jumpers for family. Nanny Brown knitted off and on, making blankets for the home. Through encasing a selection of both her nans hand knits, Lucy lures those departed conversations to natter.

Hand knitted jumpers, cardigans and blankets using mixed yarns, buttons.

Hand knitted, stitched, layered, and folded.

Isobel Currie

Cretan Stitch Conversations

Continuing an exploration of three-dimensional embroidery stitches, this work uses Cretan Stitch to diagrammatically map an artist's internal conversations. The multiplicity of stitched thread lines represent the many unspoken dialogues artists engage in to distil down a myriad of ideas and possibilities towards the endpoint of a single unified design.

Perspex box, polyester fabrics and threads.

Drilling, Machine stitching, Hand stitching

Caren Garfen

Family ties

Conversations with Leslie Kleinman, Holocaust survivor, reveal a story of devastating loss. He talks of his close family who were murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau. He carried with him tefillin which were his only remaining possession, but those too were taken. His memories have been hand-stitched onto replicated tefillin ties.

Cotton, silk threads, vintage tefillin, fabric dye, photograph, frame, Hand stitch

Ann Goddard

On the brink

Ann aims to communicate the narrative behind the work by using materials and techniques as visual metaphors. The title, materials, processes, and chrysalis forms, allude to the destruction of habitats from deforestation, resulting in pollinators such as butterflies becoming endangered species.

Ugandan bark cloth, sticks, wire, entomology pins
Cutting, burning, fabric manipulation, assembling

Christina Hesford

Abacus

Abacus is comprised of approximately 15,000 hand-tied knots - symbols of imperfection. Abacus aims to acknowledge the human habit of counting up our imperfections and errors and holding onto these as a measure of our selves; a physical representation of an internal conversation, a dialogue with the self.

Knotting - Paper and steel

Rachael Howard

Catching up over the washing up

Rachael's tea towel quadriptych responds to the opportunity for idle chats while washing and drying dishes with her mother-in-law, who doesn't own a dishwasher. A regular conversation topic revolves around the subject of dogs in the park. Off-cuts act as fabric landscapes conversing with the sketched dogs.

Sketches, fabric off cuts digitally manipulated and printed with stitch

Jean Littlejohn

What goes around.....

Jean's work reflects on the cyclical nature of fashion and trends. Reinvention and reflection. Inspiration and Influence. Decline and renewal. Complexity and simplicity. What remains fundamental is stitch.

Hand stitch on cotton cloth with cotton yarn

Debbie Lyddon

Night Walking – Betelgeuse

Every day I walk. I notice, I document, and I explore the dynamic relationship between my being and my surroundings. The landscape speaks, and I listen and respond.

Night Walking - Betelgeuse captures a fragment of remembered time: the distillation of outer reality and inner imaginative energy.

Linen, wire, written text

Pulling threads, stitching, sea-dipping, rusting, writing

Sian Martin

Whispering

Listening to whispered messages as the wind swirls around
the marshes,
Whispering messages in the reed beds,
And spreading secrets as the reeds and grasses dip their
heads to hear,
The wind repeats the whispered secrets of the marshes,
Moving from one reed bed to another as if each in
conversation.

Four concertina books made from vellum, acrylic, yarns,
fabric strips, gesso painted marks.
Folding, perforations, stitch, threading, tying.

Jane Mckeating

While they were talking, and I was drawing.

Sitting discretely in the café, her pencil captured customers drinking lattes and cappuccinos, filling lockdown days with chat. She drew until dusk. That evening, opening her sketchbook she was surprised to find you; she hadn't noticed you jumping off her pencil and dashing around so madly having a lovely time.

Hand stitch and print on cotton with cut work
Work laid out on a cloth covered board.

Richard McVetis

Grid I + II

Grid I + II are a record of the physical marks of a gesture: a communicative system that expresses both haptic and tacit knowledge. The grid offers a rational way to organise and control the chaos of Nature and is a commentary on how our lives are built and housed in this construct of time.

Hand embroidery (seeding stitch) – Cotton on wool

Sumi Perera

ROOTS - 35 Steps of Unconscious Bias

A double-sided stitched conversation of deconstructed portraits of Sumi, her kids and bi-racial grandkids. This work explores the notions of Unconscious or Implicit Bias against theories of Colonialism and Imperialism. Textual inscriptions wrap around the front and back encouraging us to have conversations around preformed prejudices to reduce unfair discrimination.

Hair, hair-dye, thread, wool, felt, canvas, fabric, paper, card
Machine stitch, hand stitch, drawn thread, quilting, print,
paint, embossing, incision

Marilyn Rathbone

Ribbonacci

In these strange, unsettled times, Marilyn's daily circular walk provides a comforting familiarity. She passes sunflowers in front gardens that, each time, call out to her, "Fibonacci". At first, planting the seeds of an idea, then recalling it to nurture a creative dialogue between artist, sunflowers, materials, and techniques.

Silk thread, grey board, acrylic paint, paper
Inkle weaving

Shuna Rendal

Language Barriers

Can opposites converse? They can touch or collide but how else communicate? Only at first with a struggle. The starkness of these contrasting forms tells the story of individual and even national communication difficulties and opportunities.

Blackthorn, laurel berry stems and wire.
Construction, wrapping and drilling

Shuna Rendal

Argument

What started the dispute? the argument may never be resolved, so contrasting are the protagonists'. One impetuous, volatile and sharp, the other resilient and insisting. Sometimes there is no end.

Blackberry stems, metal springs, copper wire
Construction, manipulation and wrapping

Vanesssa Rolf

Presence | Absence #2

Presence | Absence explores the significance of inherited objects and their capacity to tell stories. The traces of a person are imprinted in these mundane, utilitarian possessions. These works play with the visual language of museums and collections; questioning what and how we preserve, protect and memorialise.

Wool felt - Hand cut

Sally Spinks

Yeah, I'm Good Thanks 1

It's the conversation people often avoid. Speaking openly about mental health. Each tiny, knitted panel bears the phrase "I am more broken than you know" repeated in journalists' shorthand. It's a cry for help buried in soft, cosy and coded textiles, hoping that someone will notice and offer support.

Knitted panels - cotton, wool, felt

Sally Spinks

Yeah, I'm Good Thanks 2

It's the conversation people often avoid. Speaking openly about mental health. Each tiny, knitted panel bears the phrase "I am more broken than you know" repeated in morse code. It's a cry for help buried in soft, cosy and coded textiles, hoping that someone will notice and offer support.

Hand knitted panels - cotton, wool, silk, lurex, glass beads, felt

Sally Spinks

Yeah, I'm Good Thanks 3

It's the conversation people often avoid. Speaking openly about mental health. The hand tufted discs in this piece form the phrase "I am more broken than you know" in braille. It's a cry for help buried in soft, cosy, and coded textiles, hoping that someone notices and offers support.

Hand tufted Axminster yarn, card, felt

Sue Stone

Brooklyn: Recollection, Return and Repartee

Meandering lines plot our paths, and the conversations twist and turn from small talk on the subway to bantering with tall statues in Banker St, taking in gibberish and graffiti in Greenpoint, a powwow at Prospect Park, books at the library and the buzz of Brooklyn Museum on the way.

Linen & cotton fabrics, cotton & linen threads, acrylic paint
Hand stitch, machine stitch, appliqué, painting

Teresa Whitfield

Black Lace Kestos Brassiere

Black Lace Kayser Girdle

Black Lace Agent Provocateur Corset

These lace undergarments from the V&A Museum Clothworkers Centre articulate the liberalisation of women throughout the C20th; from the 1950s Kestos Brassiere and Kayser Girdle: boned, underwired, interlined with rubber, fastened with metal hooks and designed to restrict the profile of the female body, to the 1990s Agent Provocateur Corset, a garment once viewed as 'an instrument of torture', now a party outfit, flamboyant and dramatic, no longer worn under clothing but intended to be seen and celebrated.

Drawing - Ink on paper

Ealish Wilson

Morpheus 2

Ealish's work is founded in materiality and connection to place, she investigates a wide variety of substrates within her practice, transforming them from their intended use. Morpheus 2 is a travelogue combining precious saved materials from France, Japan, and Switzerland, to represent architectural forms and nature during a Parisian Winter.

Vintage Gossamer Ribbon hand smocked with mizuhiki strings and 19thc tassel bobbles.

Ealish Wilson

Macro1

Inspired by the wire sculptures of Ruth Asawa, Ealish continues to explore her dialogue with the coastal landscape. What is below this surface? A fossil, the cellular structure hidden beneath. The patterns created through fractals in the geology have been Ealish's catalyst to reinterpret Asawa's rigid forms into soft sculpture.

Digitally printed cotton/linen hand smocked and stitched with vintage mizuhiki strings.

Atsuko Yamamoto

Mercy MERCI 2021

Key workers wear Covid protective clothing and continue to work in the face of death.

There is no direct conversation, but their selflessness at work is full of mercy and people are very impressed and grateful.

Machine-embroidery – Silk and wire

Emily Jo Gibbs

The Boat Builders

This new series of portraits by Emily Jo Gibbs documents the work of the Foreman and Apprentices at Berthon Boat Company in Lymington. Highlighting the Value of Making and the importance of skilled labour. A celebration of people who prefer a hands-on approach, whose knowledge and skill is gained through the doing, learnt through making.

Many thanks to Berthon Boat Company for giving Emily access and to all the members of the Berthon team who gave up their time to talk to her, in particular Keith Longman and Dave Bowell. Many thanks also to Arts Council England for supporting this project.

Emily Jo Gibbs is a British artist who over the last two decades has established an international reputation for her delicate hand-stitched textiles. Examples of her work are in the collections of the V&A and the Crafts Council.

"I'm interested in the idea that by taking the time to slowly describe someone in stitch, you convey your admiration. Celebrating people who make things by the investment of time in making the work, a quiet, thoughtful act of care and value".

Emily Jo Gibbs

Emily Jo Gibbs – Captions

Emily Jo Gibbs

Dave 'Curly' Bolwell – Foreman Shipwright 2020

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen

£1,350

Curly came to Berthon as an Apprentice Joiner 35 years ago. He had liked woodwork at school, where he had a really inspiring teacher who also taught him to carve and offered him a job making Gypsy caravans, but Curly had been determined to do an apprenticeship.

Joinery is still Curly's favourite aspect of the job, particularly furniture making. He explained that it was always a pleasure when a cabin required fitting out, because then he could use his cabinet making skills. We talked about how jobs like that were less common and that the workforce worked across many different disciplines.

In the picture I have made of Curly he is making repairs, carefully replacing rotten wood with new, looking along the line to check his work. I felt some part of his experience and his wealth of knowledge was captured in that moment.

Emily Jo Gibbs

Bradley Watson - 3rd year Apprentice Sprayer 2020

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen

£2,650

I met Brad on my second visit to Berthon Boat Company. After spending some time with the Shipwrights, I was taken to another enormous shed filled with a white vessel that was in for repairs, we climbed the scaffolding up to the deck. There was quite a hive of activity; Brad was on the top of the boat, right up in the rafters, clipped on and in his white PPE. He sat crossed legged up above me while we chatted about his route to becoming an apprentice and his future plans. The monotony of the task in hand, rubbing down this huge yacht was not lost on me.

Emily Jo Gibbs

Adam Weeks – 2nd year Apprentice Engineer

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen

£945

Having studied Marine Engineering at college Adam came to Berthon to continue his training. He was installing a console when I was there, he explained how he enjoyed working from scratch, how there had been little opportunity to do practical things at school but he had grown up playing with Meccano and his family had boats.

Emily Jo Gibbs

Jamie Ivey – 4th year Apprentice Shipwright 2020

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen

£1,300

When I met Jamie he was working with Sam, a second year apprentice. They were working as a team on a project reconstructing Ripple a 1925 Berthon-built yacht. Jamie was on the inside, Sam on the outside doing what looked like riveting but is in fact called clinching, Jamie was teaching Sam what he had learnt previously, passing on his skill. Jamie really enjoys working with wood and hopes to stay on at Berthon after his apprenticeship finishes next year.

Emily Jo Gibbs

Sam Johnstone – 2nd year Apprentice Shipwright

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen

£945

Sam's favourite aspect of the apprenticeship was the variety of jobs and to be working hands-on, he was really glad to be out of the classroom/college environment. On the day I was there Sam was working with Jamie a fourth-year apprentice, they seemed a confident team getting on with the job in hand clinching Ripple.

Emily Jo Gibbs

Steph Jung - 3rd year Apprentice Engineer

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen

£1,300

Steph is an enthusiastic advocate for Berthon apprenticeships. She had planned to go to university to study engineering but switched to do an apprenticeship at the last minute, enjoying earning alongside learning and being free of student debt. She has taken full advantage of all Berthon have to offer including taking up the invitation to travel on board an explorer yacht from Puerto Montt to Puerto Williams through the Patagonian fjords.

Emily Jo Gibbs

Lentune

Hand stitched silk organza appliqué on linen, 2021

£3,080

Technical drawings speak to the really accurate way I like to work; I'm in full admiration of the draughtsmanship. This piece, an exploration of colour and line was inspired by and based upon the beautiful plan of a 12 ton Aux Cutter named Lentune from the archive of St Barbe Museum.

The original 'lines plan' is from The Berthon Boat Company Ltd and as far as I can make out was drawn around 1936 by Rodney Paul.

Harry G May's chief designer Rodney Paul 'drew the lines' of the original Gauntlet class in 1934.