



## Anne Griffiths :: Contemporary Textile Art – September/October Newsletter

Dear all,

It has been a happy but hectic last six weeks, with visits to Wokingham Embroiderers' Guild to give the talk "[Diamond Stitches](#)" and to [Montpellier Quilters](#) in Cheltenham, for "[Stories in Stitch](#)".

It was great to return to both places, I used to live in Wokingham and teach in Cheltenham so there were many old friends to see. Thank you to both groups for making me so welcome and also to the lovely Myfanwy Hart of [Winifred Cottage](#) for the beautiful threads.

A lot less talking and more stitching when I went to Uffington School for a couple of workshops based around the Alice in Wonderland iPhones. In the first workshop we began by talking about the story and looking at my hangings then we discussed what icons could be used to represent the different characters. Each of the 17 children drew their icons, first on paper and then onto 12cms squares of calico. Then they painted them with fabric paints and left to dry for the week.

In the second session we cut out the icons from the calico and selected a coloured felt background to apply them to. Everyone stitched the icons onto the felt and decorated them with beads, buttons and ribbons as they liked. Finally we laid the icons out on the background as they were going to be applied.



I took the iPhone away and machine stitched the icons to the background.

Here is the finished hanging with the children from years 4 and 5.

Other classes this month have included [Felt](#), at Coggs Farm in Witney, Oxfordshire. This is one of my favourite fabrics and I make far too little of it so look out for more in the future. At the bottom of the newsletter there are some before and after pictures of one of the pieces made on the workshop.



Margaret Pinsent who came on the course is quite interested in starting a felting group to meet once a month or so, if you are interested then I am happy to put you in touch.

Many of you will already have seen on my [Facebook](#) pages the wonderful work of [Isabelle Davies](#) - Unit Four and Assessment Book Cover, [Stephanie Toole](#) - Unit Two and from Canada, [Pamala Paige](#) – Unit One. Do have a look if you are interested in developing your own machine embroidery there are some lovely samples, again I have put a couple of pictures at the end.



Anyone you read my last newsletter will be aware of how impressed I was with Amsterdam and everything about the art and culture there. I was so pleased that I just managed to catch "[Vermeer and his Music](#)" at the National Gallery. This exhibition included musical instruments that were contemporary with the paintings and explored the way that they were represented in paintings.

I came away from the exhibition, with an appreciation of how much we take for granted the immediacy of music today. We need only plug in our headphones to hear any genre of music by any orchestra or band that we choose. In the last decade or two, music has become available wherever we choose to listen whether that is on public transport or in the open air. Music can be appreciated as a solitary activity more than ever before.

In the days of Vermeer, music was used as either symbol of transience or metaphor for harmony within relationships. If you wanted music, you made it yourself, at home, with friends and family, or in taverns as well as visiting concert halls.

These paintings represent everything happening in everyday life from the bawdy scenes of the drinking houses where prostitutes play and sing in the tradition of wine, women and song, to more intriguing scenes where demure young women play "solely for the glory of God" with the

assistance of their tutors intent on duets of a more intimate nature.

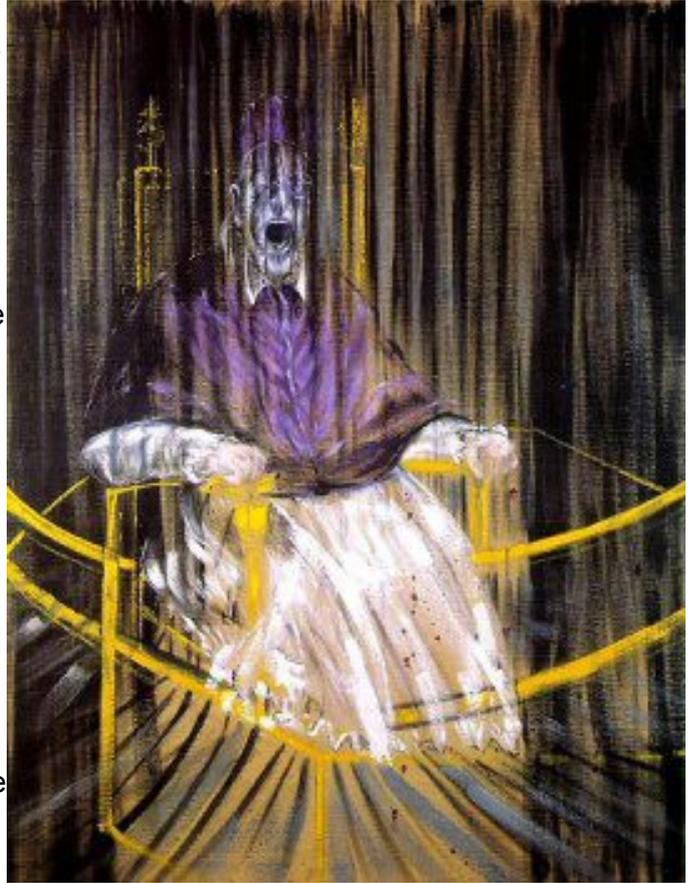
There are two short but fascinating films about the subject if you follow the link above – well worth a look.

The second exhibition I got to recently was [Francis Bacon / Henry Moore: Flesh and Bone](#) which shows two artists one would not normally associate. They both were greatly affected by their experiences during the second world war and exhibited together several times and continued to be friends until the end of Moore's life.

The Moore sketches made in the London underground shelters from which he made his name as a war artist and from which he took as starting points for so many of his sculptures are shown.

For Bacon the subject that would dominate his paintings was the grotesque, half human portraits. My favourite, was there, one from the series of Popes, based on those by Velazquez. These pictures were heavily influenced by the Odessa Steps scene from the film "The Battleship Potemkin", well worth a watch if you can still get it.

The exhibition encouraged me to reread "Francis Bacon: Anatomy of an Enigma" by Michael Peppiatt and I can thoroughly recommend it. A fascinating life and insight into the world of 1960's Soho.



There is so much more to write, but I must stop now, am currently in Cornwall where the weather has been kind to us, but more of that next time!

Best wishes,

Anne



Purple flowers, before and after felting.



Pamala Paige - above



Stephanie Toole

Isabelle Davies - right

