



## Anne Griffiths :: Contemporary Textile Art – July Newsletter

Dear All,

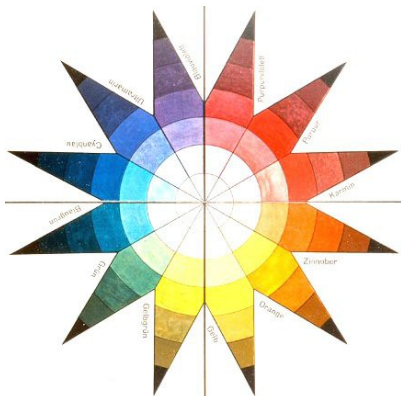
The three documentaries [“All in the Best Possible Taste”](#) by Grayson Perry were some of the best programmes that I have seen for a long time. Each one attempted to identify the differences in taste between the English working, middle and upper classes and the “tribes” within them. From this social dialogue Grayson designed a set of six tapestries.

After the programme was over I hoped that I would be able to see them and purely by chance I noticed that they were showing at the [Victoria Miro Gallery](#). In real life they were of course so much better than on TV. I love the idea of these tapestries showing the minutiae of everyday life.

They were made in Flanders on a computerised loom, but still reflect the style of those found in stately homes worked on by hand for months and depicting epic myths and legends. The fragments of text were witty and insightful and the concepts behind the work became clear when there was the time to linger. I cannot recommend highly enough watching the series and visiting the exhibition it was without doubt the best thing I have seen this year.



[Bauhaus Art as Life](#) is a large exhibition of work by students and tutors of the famous Bauhaus school in Germany shown at The Barbican. The exhibits included painting, furniture making, pottery, metalwork, graphics and textiles. The highlights for me were the methods that the tutors of the school employed to allow students to unlearn habits they had been taught relating to a particular discipline.



Wassily Kandinsky, one of the Bauhaus tutors devised a colour exercise for the scholars who had to fill a square, circle and triangle using the primary colour it most suggested. Simple enough until you had to explain why you had used each of the colours. Johannes Itten, another tutor, would train sensory

perception by asking students to touch different textures with their eyes closed.

Even at the start, these methods of unlearning were seen as a challenge to middle class society and German children were threatened 'If you don't behave, I'll send you to the Bauhaus'.

The forms used by Oskar Schlemmer in his costumes for the ballet are amazing, they particularly reminded me that ideas we imagine to be so innovative today, have all been done before!

Of course the development of the various fonts was something I was very interested in. Hajo Rose was a student and designer who I had not heard of before and his ideas of using letters purely as shapes intrigued me. There was only one piece in the exhibition and I can find very little regarding his work. If anyone knows any more about him, do let me know.

I taught a couple of workshops this month. The first, on the 24th was at Courthill Centre on the Ridgeway near Wantage. This was the first workshop I had run from here. It was a beautiful, hot, sunny day, and still the room was cool and light. We spent the day playing with a variety of machine techniques, twin needles, wing needles, free machine embroidery and working on soluble fabric. Everyone left with plenty of samples and ideas on how to develop these further for use in their own work.

I will repeat this workshop, ["Machine Embroidery - Beginners and Improvers"](#) at the same location on 18th September, for those that couldn't come this month. On 6th November at the same venue I will run ["Metallics, Paint and Stitch"](#) where we will use a combination of metallic materials, fabric paints, bronzing powders and your choice of machine or hand stitch to create an illuminated letter. There will also be the opportunity to use soluble fabric if you have never used it before. There are still some places for both these courses if you would like to come. The cost of each day is £28.00.



To reserve a place please send a cheque made payable to Anne Griffiths, 4 Gabriel House, Newbury Street, Wantage OX12 8DJ.

The second workshop this month was at Bath Embroiderers Guild, it was lovely to return after a couple of years. This time the subject was ["Klimt"](#) and we looked at the composition of many of his paintings before working on a design for a small panel.

We used painted bondaweb, tiny scraps of different coloured fabrics, gutta, gold



leaf, bronzing powders, puree tubes to name but a few materials! These were then stitched using a variety of techniques from traditional gold work, hand embroidery and machine embroidery. Everyone had a very productive day, as you can see from the images below. There are lots more in my [Klimt Gallery](#).



I did manage to tear myself away from the Olympics for an hour or so and watched the programme [History of Art in Three Colours](#). Coincidentally, the first one was about gold and how it had been used in art over the centuries. The programme included a section about Klimt's "The Kiss". I had no idea how many different gold materials and techniques he used in this piece, apparently eight types of gold leaf alone!

It has occurred to me that some of the programmes and exhibitions I refer to may be nearing their end by the time you get the newsletters. I do usually try and put links to them on my [Face book](#) page if you would like to hear about them earlier.

Best wishes and have a good August.

Anne