



Anne Griffiths :: Contemporary Textile Art :: June Newsletter

Dear all,

When is a napkin not a napkin?

I originally set off for Waddesden Manor in Bucks to see "Sacred Stitches", the exhibition of goldwork I mentioned in last month's newsletter. What I ended up seeing, was ["Folded Beauty"](#), an exhibition of folded table linen by the Catalan artist Joan Sallas. Fantastic Renaissance and Baroque birds and animals have been created from patterns popular during the 18th and 19th century.

This design, by Andreas Klett 1724, is called "Springbrunnen" is for a folded table linen fountain. The exhibition is on until October and is possibly the most unusual one I have seen so far this year and well worth the visit, you may even have time for Sacred Stitches too!



A project I was reading about recently also focuses on napkins, but in a very different way. The [Napkin Project](#), is a collaboration between artist Deirdre Nelson, Brunelcare and arts consultancy Willis Newson and evolved from the observations of staff at Care Homes where residents with dementia were seen playing with, and exploring the napkins they used at mealtimes. One lady would join napkins together to carry her possessions around, another used hers as a vase to hold flowers. A napkin becomes more than just a napkin when it is something to keep your hands busy, a bag, a hat or an aide-memoire. In order to help unlock the creativity of these residents, members of the public are being asked to embroider napkins for the project. You need no particular skills so anyone can join in. I have sent for my napkin and am waiting for it's arrival with my needle threaded!



More folding of a different kind during the [tassels workshop](#) at Courthill. In the morning we created basic tassels, added beading to the skirts and in the afternoon, included folding techniques which could be used for standalone tassels or as tops for more elaborate skirts.



Here is one of the folded tassels that was made on the day.

If anyone is interested in a repeat of this workshop or a follow up day then do get in touch.

There are still places available on the design day based on Views at [Courthill Centre](#), Wantage on 9th July. This course was inspired by my stitched piece on the beach at Rye although your view could be of something completely different. During the day we will take one of your own favourite postcards or photographs of a view and make a paper collage from it. This collage will then be the basis for your own stitched piece. The cost is £28 and you will need to bring materials and lunch, or you can buy lunch from the Centre's cafe.



The pastel shades of pink blossoms and lime green leaf buds from last month have nearly all disappeared and been replaced with tiny seed pods, still soft and smooth. These will grow into the beech nuts, acorns and ash keys that I am look forward to using for inspiration in the autumn.



I have added an extra week from 28th February - 7th March for [Trees and Leaves](#) next March's residential course in Cornwall as it has been so popular and the photos from last month are evolving slowly into panels. I have been playing with printing blocks, monoprint and resists to create some background fabrics which have then been embroidered and quilted. I will be putting more images of stitched samples, together with my photographs and drawings in the next week or so, and will put a link in the next newsletter.

Of course some of these panels will be making their debut at [Gardens](#) in October 2013. Previously, this has been a mainly machine embroidery course, but I will be including some hand stitch too for those who prefer it and pieces from the [Fruit Harvest](#) which could be used as inspiration for an Orchard Garden.

The Gardens course, was originally inspired by my Alice in Wonderland pieces, the hangings are now on show in "Imagine" at the [Oxford Museum Gallery](#) until 1st September.



I have had two exciting Distance Learning parcels to look at this month. They are both samples from Unit Two the first by [Irene Donovan](#) and the other by [Nicky Villalard](#).



Irene is also creating a [blog](#) on her experiences of the course as is [Sonja Stokes](#), these are both really interesting to read and to look at current samples and ideas.

Apart from the aforementioned napkins, the only exhibition that I managed to squeeze in before it ended last month was the Lichtenstein retrospective at Tate Modern.

I had only really thought about Lichtenstein before this exhibition in terms of his cartoon reproductions and his reinvention of the benday dot process. Benjamin Day developed the process in 1879 as an inexpensive way to give the impression of tones and halftones and it became especially popular in the twentieth century for newspaper and comic book illustrations.



This exhibition showed many of the greatest paintings from Lichtenstein's pop art period, a time when he merged high and low art with advertisements. There were also sculptures, his interpretations of traditional Chinese brush painting pieces and his later work which took inspiration from his artistic mentors Picasso and Matisse.

There are so many more sides to this artist than I had initially appreciated, it was well worth the trip and some further research into his later work.





I will end with a my own very simple image drawn in the style of Matisse and an interpretation in dots produced using free [Rasterbator](#) software – great fun!

Best wishes,

Anne

