

EXHIBITIONS

SO!

Wessex Textiles at Salisbury Library, Salisbury, Wiltshire, England 24th April – 15 May

I used to be a member of this group but always felt it was unfair that, for that reason, it was not possible to review their exhibitions for WoW. But now that I have been forced to take leave of absence due to a hand operation, it's great to be able to see what this talented bunch have been producing since I left.

The group very much work to their own themes rather than taking an overall title. This gives full rein to their imaginative skills and enables them to call on resources from previous work. It is interesting to see the progression. Rosemary Jarvis has moved from landscapes, often dramatic with bold colour contrasts, to a softer, more romantic colour scheme inspired by the old, crumpling walls of old Indian buildings.

The piece shown on this page *Palace Walls, Rajastan, 'Bikaner'*, shows how well she has captured the feel of her subject. Working with an embellisher machine, she has trapped old Indian textiles into the fibres and livened up the pieces with the addition of beads, coins and charms.

It is a measure of her skill that the soft needlefelt surfaces look exactly like old flaky plaster and the metallic additions, which could look gaudy, are precisely judged.



Maggie Hills is another artist whose style is always evolving. Well known for her *Allotment* series featuring hens, see right, she has moved to landscapes.

These are still produced in her unique style, layering sheers and painted fabrics, machine stitching and cutting back before adding more paint to the details.

Now however the colours are on the wild side. The shapes, although recognisably trees and fields, are exaggerated and the final paint finish adds a suede-like quality to the finish.

You can see how this works in the piece *Lansdapes on my Mind*, below, right.



Trisha Forshaw has sidestepped from landscape to city scape with her work in silk paper and stitch (*Street in Grasse*, below left). I think this piece shows how good a move that was, with the blocky shapes of the buildings combining well with the text in to create a dynamic that sweeps the viewer into the scene. The sense of perspective, sometimes lacking in the landscapes, is heightened in this work. I do hope that she pursues this theme – it will be interesting to see how it moves on.



Lynne Prosser produced beautifully stitched banners (on the right you can see *Calm*) with lettering related to the theme applied to a patched and pieced background.

I hadn't seen this style of Lynne's and rather mourned her series of heads which I thought were wonderful. Brave to move on from such great work but she is not one to get stuck in a rut and the colour and freshness of this piece were very appealing.



It is very difficult to move on from a successful series, especially if you have always sold well. Ruby Lever's *Birdsong 2* (below), shows her moving from her corsets and strips to a series of framed pieces, where lettering combines with stitched and applied slips. The slips are lovely and combine well with the other elements that form the background.



Although I started off by saying that the exhibition has no particular theme, there was a general link in the colour with Brenda Weeks and Carolyn Sinclair adding some real zing. Brenda's pieces were difficult to photograph but here is a detail of *Splash of Colour 1* below.

Carolyn's *Abstract of Tulips* (right) is worked by using embroidery software and stitching the results onto a loose-weave fabric. Results from the embroidery unit can often look flat but this is saved by the stunning colours.



The exhibition pulled together well, with lots to see at first glance and a satisfying amount of detail for a second look. I really enjoyed seeing it – how nice to be a viewer without all the angst of producing work.

COMING SOON

We don't usually have a 'Forthcoming Exhibition slot but we are very much hoping to review this one, by the Fibretrix group, for the next issue – and Jennifer McFarlane, a WoW favourite (see this issue), has work in it.

Garden Texture, with work ranging from hand and machine embroidery to quilting and felting, can be seen at the Dawyck Botanic Gardens, Scottish Borders, from Sunday 2nd September till Friday 30th November.

