

REFLECTIONS
OF
SOUTH HILL PARK

30TH SEPTEMBER
TO
5TH NOVEMBER
2023

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Cover photo and above photo from the
South Hill Park archives

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South Hill Park postcard from the 1900s from the South Hill Park archives

REFLECTIONS OF SOUTH HILL PARK

Throughout our lives we maintain a continuous relationship with cloth; it is the witness to, and record of, our lives. Performing such a role, textiles are a perfect medium through which to reflect on South Hill Park, the building and its history. And so it is with this exhibition.

However, this exhibition is also a celebration of MA Textiles at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) Farnham. Textile excellence and Farnham School of Art, now UCA, have been synonymous since Ella McLeod took on the role of Head of Textiles in 1949. She had been a student of Elizabeth Peacock, who in turn had been a student of Ethel Mairet, thus establishing the foundational value of continuum of practice. Those pioneering principles of innovation embedded in technical knowledge and material understanding have been sustained to this day. In 2007 the MA in Textiles at UCA Farnham began to encourage students to explore how they could use their finely honed skills to engage with other possibilities alongside the strictly functional. These included the use of cloth to articulate space and to materialise the stories of place, both so central to this exhibition. The mantra is always: if you know how and why anything/everything is possible. Over the years since 2007, the MA Textiles students at Farnham have produced exceptional work, which in many cases led to highly successful PhD's.

One of the dictionary definitions of the word consuo is 'to sew together'. Here, in 'Reflections of South Hill Park', the Consuo Group has 'sewn together' work from some of the final MA Textiles Farnham graduates, showcasing the diversity of techniques, materials and narratives. Each approach is personal to the artist, but all demonstrate that commitment to material and technical excellence that has been the hallmark of Farnham textile graduates at all levels and at all times.

Lesley Millar MBE

Professor Emerita of Textile Culture,
University for the Creative Arts



South Hill Park photo from the South Hill Park archives

EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION BY LOUCIA MANOPOULOU

The celebration of 50 years as an Arts Centre is a significant milestone for South Hill Park and provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the centre's history, achievements, and contributions to the arts community, as well as the rich history of the venue. For this, as a South Hill Park curator, I decided to instigate exhibitions that are inspired by or reflect the centre's history, building and highlight significant memorable moments from the past.

From being a private house, South Hill Park opened its door to the public as a home for the arts in October 1973. As the building has three floors and close to 60 rooms, conversion was a complicated process, which was divided into phases. However, a range of courses and activities were offered whilst conversion work continued. Several of the courses were related to crafts many of which were textiles: weaving, embroidery and more. This emphasis on textiles influenced the curatorial decision to invite the Consuo Textiles Artists group to respond to the mansion's history and its role as a cultural organisation over the past 50 years.

The artists group consists of alumni from the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) textile course. UCA Farnham has a rich and enduring legacy in textiles and has been at the forefront of textile education and innovation for many years, whilst Farnham is the first town in England and only the third region in Europe to be given 'World Craft City' status. Furthermore, the university's roots in textile education can be traced back to the mid-19th century.

The members of the group were students of textile scholar Professor Lesley Millar, Director of the International Textile Research Centre and professor of Textile Culture, whose practice as an academic and curator has pushed the boundaries of the textiles field from its material properties to the conceptual and the intellect. The application of Textiles Thinking is evident in all of Millar's work, for example in *Lost in Lace* (2011), *Cloth & Memory* (2013) and more recently *The Erotic Cloth* (2017) where she challenged boundaries: borderlines and margins, shadow and light, transparency and opacity, the surface of the skin and the touch of cloth, and seduction and fetishism.

Textile Thinking can be used as an effective strategy for generating novel concepts, problem-solving, and creatively overcoming challenges in interdisciplinary research contexts manifest in the work of Frances Geesin, *Body Forms* featured in *Reflections of South Hill Park*.

Geesin who was invited by the group as a guest artist, aims to further reveal the seemingly invisible. This exploration led her to study and interpret some of the discoveries in the field of nanomedicine, or molecular medicine. She is working with scientists exploring Nanotechnology and interpreting their electron microscopic images, contributing through her practice to demystifying nano science.

Reflections of South Hill Park includes textile installations by fifteen members of Consuo. The textile artists following an in-depth investigation of the venue's history and archive, a close examination of the architecture and special features of the building as well as the gardens, and the observation of the operation of the arts centre, revealed aspects of its history which have been left in the shadow, been unnoticed, unconsidered, or forgotten.

Terry Donaldson's Blue Spaces considers how the visitors engage with the outside spaces at South Hill Park, while Evie Francis' In the Gardens drew inspiration from the form and colour of the flowers and plants growing year-round, with a focus on the Italian garden. In addition, Jennifer Jones' Silent Record reflects on the trees in the park surrounding the buildings to highlight their characteristic to carry a silent record of the history of South Hill Park. Delia Salter's A Walk in the Park is the result of dyeing wool with plants such as can be found at South Hill Park, celebrating the botanic properties of the grounds attached to a historic house, as well as expressing her distress on global issues relating to the decreasing numbers of insects that inhabit and feed on these plants.

Geraldine Lewis in Metaphor uses patchwork and quilting techniques to reflect on the Sir Arthur Divett Hayter commission of Temple Lushington Moore to redesign the mansion and the gardens of South Hill Park. Vaulted by Beth Town was also inspired by the architecture of the mansion and the Italian garden designed by architect Temple Moore. In Past, Present, Future Town reflects on the history of South Hill Park, from its origins as a stately home to an arts and crafts centre in the 1970s where crochet and lace were taught from its inception to today.

Janice Webb's Thresholds are translations of an experience visiting South Hill Park to celebrate its 50 years as an Arts Centre while Jennifer Sutton's Erstwhile was inspired by the wooden flooring in the Garden Room at South Hill Park. The building has also inspired Deb King's Lost Luxury which reflects the private rooms, that are now often deserted and hushed. Fringes, braids and tassels echo the flourishes we still see in the carving and plasterwork.

Wendy Irving was inspired by the art intervention, featuring a piece of original wallpaper on the off-white wall at South Hill Park's Tall Hall. Her *If These Walls Could Talk* is an interpretation, an idea or a tiny glimpse of the lives of some of the people who lived at the Victorian mansion, preserved in wallpaper and captured in a frame.

Janet Pullen in *Stairways* reflects on the architectural elements of the mansion, including steps, treads and railings. Moreover, Pullen emphasises the notion of climbing stairs as a narrative for people taking part in a range of activities in the Arts Centre, as they seek to enrich their lives, improve their skills and learn from new experiences which enable them to embark on new challenges.

Tara Kennedy's *Comforts* responds to South Hill Park being used as a war work collection centre during the 1st World War, of hand-knitted items, consisting of socks, balaclavas and gloves made in khaki wool, by local women for the troops on the front line in France. While Annette Mills' *Nature's Blanket* references the blankets used by the patients of Royal Sea Bathing Hospital of Margate in Kent, who were sent to South Hill Park during the Second World War to receive a pioneer open-air treatment for tuberculosis (TB).

Furthermore, Clare Spender's, a former South Hill Park Arts Co-ordinator, *Dust Cloth*, a 10m length of silk chiffon cloth reflects on a memory of huge plastic sheeting hanging from ceiling to floor during the re-development of the building in 2002. Lastly, Elena Sparke with *The Book of All and The Last Book*, seeks to connect ideas and realms.

This exhibition demonstrates that contemporary textiles and heritage are not opposing forces; rather, they complement and enrich each other. The fusion of innovation, conceptual exploration, and textile skill offers new narratives to South Hill Park Arts Centre, embracing the possibilities of contemporary artistic expression.

Reflections of South Hill Park inspires us to appreciate and reimagine the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage, fostering dialogue, and opening doors to new creative possibilities.

This exhibition is part of South Hill Parks 50th year anniversary celebrations as well as part of Farnham October Craft Month 2023 programme.

Dr Loucia Manopoulou, MA, MRes, PhD
South Hill Park Curator



THE ARTISTS



Consuo Textiles is a group of textile artists formed in 2022. They met while studying and working at University of the Creative Arts, Farnham, under the mentorship of Professor Lesley Millar.

The group was formed to undertake creative collaborations and exhibitions, and each member of the group has their own unique approach to their practice. Together as Consuo they explore the potentials of textile art, each taking a varied approach to common interests and issues, and giving rise to a rich and diverse group of artworks.

Each artist works with a range of techniques and media, including weave, knit, crochet, print, film, and stitch. Incorporating diverse materials, from natural fibres, wire, dust, cotton, wool and the earth, and exploring the potential of these techniques and media. The group looks to challenge and push the boundaries of the traditional understanding of textile art and raise its profile.

'Reflections of South Hill Park' is Consuo's inaugural exhibition. This exhibition showcases the work of fifteen artists from the group, and we are delighted to feature work by guest artist, Frances Geesin.

'Reflections of South Hill Park' is a celebration of the 50th anniversary of South Hill Park as an Art Centre. Each artist has responded to South Hill Park's history, grounds, people or architecture and they present the results of this endeavour at South Hill Park from the 30th September - 5th November 2023 and within this catalogue.

Consuo – from latin, to stich/join, to sew together.

www.consuoarttextiles.co.uk

GUEST ARTIST - FRANCES GEESIN

www.francesgeesin.com

The Consuo Group are honoured and delighted to welcome Frances Geesin as their first guest artist – a truly appropriate choice. Frances has embraced the potential of textiles to the fullest extent throughout her long career. As a lover of drawing she first trained in painting and drawing at Worthing Art College, she then moved to the Royal College of Art to study weaving, finding a correspondence with drawing in the lines of thread in the warp and weft. On leaving the Royal College she embarked on a successful career as a costume designer specializing in knit.

After many years she returned to the Royal College to undertake a PhD during which time she developed her ‘signature’ electro-plated textiles and her research into conductive fibres and materials were incorporated by Philips for their wearable electronics. She also began her collaborative work with her husband, Ron Geesin, producing the interactive sound and light fibre panel for the Science Museum in London. She has retained a compelling curiosity and need to know what, how and why throughout her career, always keeping track of the latest scientific thinking, which culminated in her being awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Institute of Nanotechnology in 2008, amongst many other awards for technical innovation.

Frances Geesin is open and hugely generous in the sharing of her knowledge and understanding with other enthusiasts, be they professionals or students. She can be described as a modern Renaissance woman, for which we can all rejoice and be grateful.

Lesley Millar MBE
Professor Emerita of Textile Culture
University for the Creative Arts



TORSO

Frances' aim was to create a series of forms described with line (thermoplastic polypropylene fibre) by gradually reducing the amount of fibre covering, still suggesting the forms which are self-supporting due to their being electroplated copper. Created by fusing thermoplastic polypropylene fibres to a dress form: describing form with fibre with the addition of electroplating transforming the fibres to metal, making the forms self-supporting.



Each torso is 44cm length x 45 cm at their widest point.



TORSO



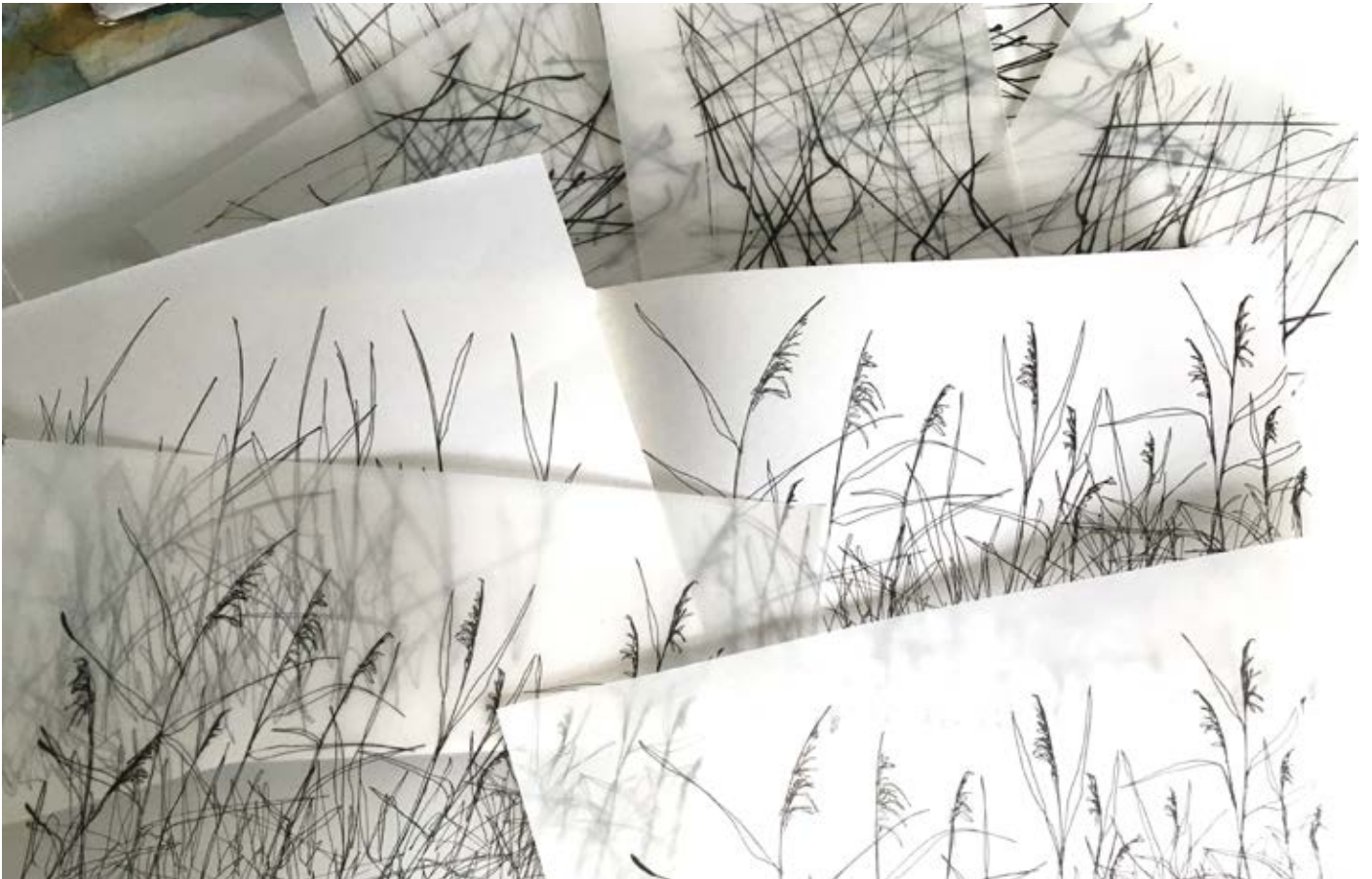
TERRY DONALDSON

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Through her work Terry endeavours to depict the beauty and fragility of the natural environment, looking for ways to help people notice how special the landscape is and begin to engage more deeply with it.

Originally working with coastal landscapes, her focus is on the idea of nature-connectedness and the apparent tension between the needs of people and natural processes which has led to us becoming disconnected from nature.





Clockwise from top:
Dragonfly photograph taken at South Hill Park
Stitch details
Laying down the first layers of mineral
pigment paint - a mix of Prussian Blue and
hand- processed Bideford Black.

Opposite page:
Drawings of reeds blowing in the wind.



BLUE SPACES

With accessible walking and orienteering trails South Hill Park offers several ways for people to immerse themselves in the natural environment, becoming reconnected. Much has been written about the benefit to people from engaging with green spaces, but Terry has always responded more to the blue and grey: seascapes, big skies and waterside environments. Research shows that this is true for many people, with blue prescribing becoming a valuable treatment for mental health issues.



Above: The reedbed trail

Right: The dam

Exploring the parkland trails she discovered the reedbed, thought to have been used historically as a filter for grey water from the house. Today, together with the lakes, the reedbed helps absorb excess water, preventing local flooding. So many of our 21st century problems can be solved through recognition of our essential interconnectedness with, and reliance on, the natural world.





DRAGONFLY, FOX
AND HEDGEHOG

&

PLAYING BY THE
WATER

Above:
Dragonfly, Fox and Hedgehog &
Playing by the Water (right)

Right:
Playing by the Water Detail





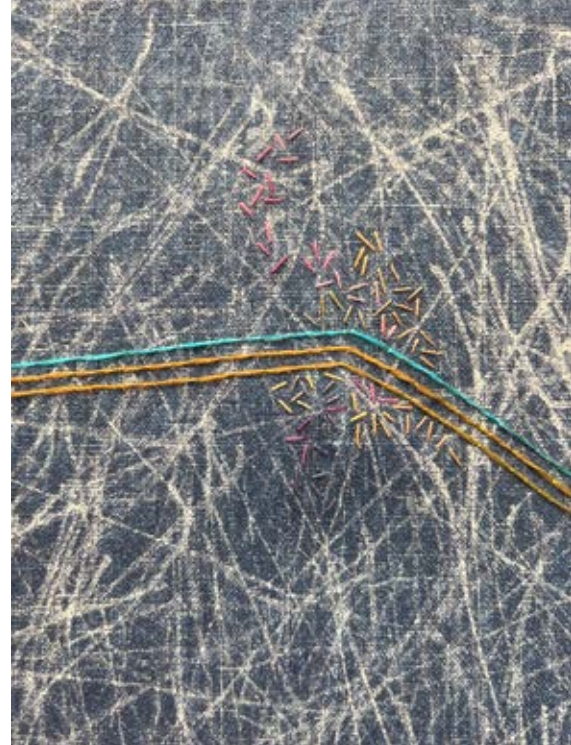
THE LONG GRASS NEAR THE DAM

Above:
The long grass near the Dam (left) &
Reedbed Trail (Right)

Right:
Couching threads - Couched threads
represent the pathways through the
grounds; several people and animals walk
at the same time.



REEDBED TRAIL



Above:
Reedbed trail detail

Left:
Reedbed trail

Working with earth and mineral pigments, some collected and processed by hand, Terry has painted and printed cloth to show glimpses of the blue spaces at South Hill Park. Hand stitch adds a subtle extra dimension, depicting pathways and contours, inviting viewers to consider how they engage with the outside spaces at South Hill Park.

EVIE FRANCIS

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Evie Francis is a textile artist who specialises in woven textiles. Working on a George Wood mechanical dobby loom, her work is made and manipulated by hand, creating one-of-a-kind pieces inspired by organic forms and nature, often out of unconventional materials such as nylon monofilament yarn and wire to explore how the loom can create three-dimensional woven textiles.

Evie has exhibited her work internationally, in locations such as Farnham, London and Kyoto, and her work has been featured in Vogue+ by Vogue China, and can be seen in the music video for 'Esa Carita' by Amelia Ignacia. In 2017, Evie graduated from the University for the Creative Arts in Farnham with a First Class degree in woven textiles, and in 2021 graduated from UCA with a Distinction in MA Textiles. From September 2021 to September 2023 she worked as the woven textiles technician at UCA Farnham, and now works as the technical tutor for constructed textiles at UCA Epsom.





Overleaf and left: work in progress

Below: detail from In the Gardens



Photos by Evie Francis



IN THE GARDENS



Drawing inspiration from the form and colour of the flowers and plants growing year-round at South Hill Park, these woven pieces show the diversity and beauty of the grounds surrounding the building. Using heat set shibori and stitch to manipulate the shape of each piece after weaving, the flat panels are transformed into three-dimensional, organic sculptures.



Photos by Evie Francis





IN THE
GARDENS



Handwoven
nylon
monofilament,
high-twist wool
and fancy yarns,
heat-set shibori
and stitch.

All photos apart
from top right
by Evie Francis

WENDY IRVING

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@ wovenbywendy

Wendy is a Woven Textile Artist based in Surrey. Her work examines how cloth can be used as a metaphor for a host of conceptual ideas found in the everyday. Unafraid to tackle big issues, Wendy hopes that her work can be a catalyst for conversations around difficult or provocative themes.

Her work also explores and provides some evidence for the way that creative practice together with critical thinking can serve as a vehicle for self-discovery, development, and healing.



Left to right:
Torn wallpaper at South Hill Park
Sample woven on a Table Loom - raw silk and rayon.



Clockwise from bottom left:

Initial samples 1&2 - Exploration of various overshoot designs in various colours on the table loom.

Threading the warp

Photos by Wendy Irving

'IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK'



Detail from 'If These Walls Could Talk' -
Raw Silk and Rayon Handwoven Overshot Design

Photos by Wendy Irving



WENDY IRVING

'IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK'

Wendy's work for 'Reflections of South Hill Park' explores how removing and uncovering the old wallpaper in a building reminds one of the existences of the past lives lived within its walls.

Colours, prints, fashions, and personalities reveal themselves, one layer at a time.

In the end we are left with a souvenir of a life, a trip, a story of what was once before. If These Walls Could Talk was inspired by a piece of original wallpaper which is still on the wall in South Hill Park.

Wendy has intended it to be an interpretation and a tiny glimpse of the lives of some of the people who lived at South Hill Park; preserved in wallpaper and captured in a frame.





Hand-Woven Wall Art, an interpretation of peeling wallpaper.

Three traditional overshot designs combined into one draft.

Raw silk and Rayon threads, hand manipulated into place on a Table Loom

JENNIFER JONES

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@ jenniferjoneswoventextiles

Jennifer's work is a continual exploration and investigation of the relationship between fibre and structure. Using a wide range of yarns, hand weaving, on and off looms and a variety of techniques she explores and pushes the traditional boundaries of weave to design new, novel, surfaces and methods.

Her aim for every piece is to provoke inquiry and reflection, each designed to invite the observer to query their own ideas about the uses of yarn and fibre and to consider the potential therein. For this exhibition Jennifer has handwoven a piece off loom entitled 'Silent Record'.



Details of 'Silent Record' during construction.

Left: The main section warp, strung and painted before weaving.

Right: The main section of the warp during the weaving process.

Below: A mark to signify the suicide of a maid, by drowning in the lake in 1880.





SILENT RECORD

Silent Record was woven freehand, away from a loom using appropriate colours and textures of materials and yarns. A firm frame was made and then padded to make an irregular shape, a linen warp was then strung between that and a central ring, then painted before weaving was started.

Various yarns and fibre, some dyed with rust solution were woven intermittently in the warps until the frame was full. A raffia edge was looped into the warps as they wrapped the frame and a looped chain of a mixture of appropriate coloured wools was applied to represent the final bark edge. Final markings were then added to record past characters associated with South Hill Park

When a tree is cut down, there is a visible ring in the wood for every year that the tree was alive, each one quietly recording the elements and environment of that year. The trees in the park surrounding the buildings will carry a silent record of the history of South Hill Park.

This tree would have been around 150 yrs old and while it may not have been able to absorb the spirit of the residents it seems fitting to add symbolic marks for some of the notable events or residents of the place. Many of the trees in the park are very old and could potentially have been growing in the area before the original house was built and there are several tree stumps in the park where you can stop to consider the progress of time.



Photo by Jennifer Jones



JENNIFER JONES

Silent Record 2023 Cotton, Linen, Wool, Rayon, Raffia, Jute and Sisal

TARA KENNEDY

www.tarakennedy.co.uk

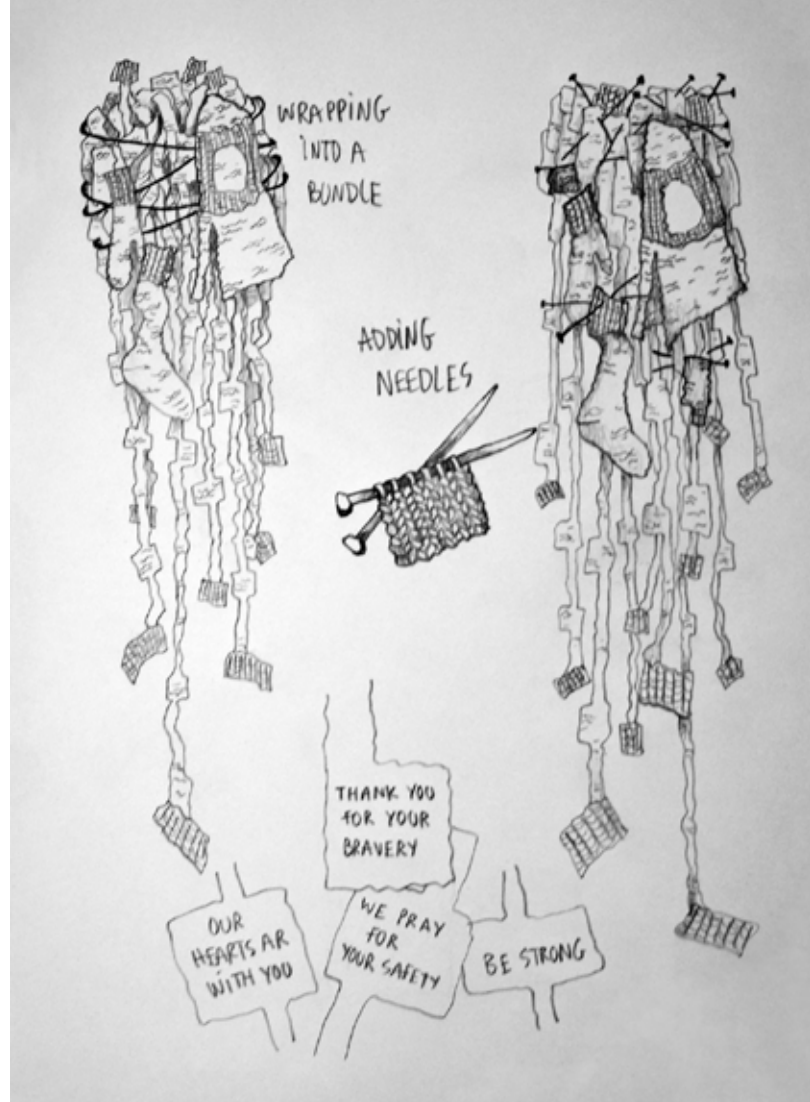
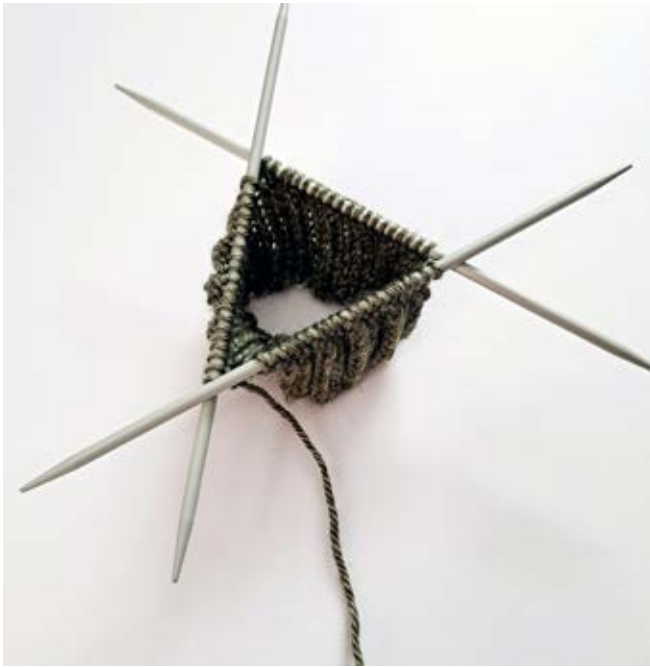
@ tarakennedytextileart

As a textile artist Tara creates conceptual sculptures and wall art inspired by her emotional responses to various experiences, incidents and observations. Her designs are often highly textured with intense twists and loops, dramatic cascades and heavily wrapped bundles.

Techniques involve knitting, stitch, wrapping, coiling and felting, plus detailed drawings. These drawings provide an alternative viewpoint and compliment her 3D work. The materials she uses include mixed yarns, fabrics and threads and sometimes the addition of other contrasting materials. Colour is important, helping to translate the right expression which sometimes involves hand dyed yarns. Process is also significant referencing therapeutic and calming practices.



Sketchbook page with WWI newspaper articles requesting comforts to be knitted, leaflets and pattern books with instructions on how to make them, drawings of ideas for knitting and samples of stitched messages.



Clockwise from above:
Drawing of the final sculpture created from all of the hand and machine knitted items

Hand knitted helmet made from 1917 patterns in Olive Whiting's Khaki Knitting Book

Knitting with double pointed needles

COMFORTS

During the First World War the owners of South Hill Park Arthur Divett Hayter (Lord Haversham) and his wife Henrietta Hope (Lady Haversham) let the building operate as a war work collection centre. A campaign had been organised asking people to knit 'comforts' to be donated for the troops in France. These included socks, balaclava helmets, gloves, chest warmers and special designs like the rifleman's glove, a type of mitten with two fingers. Knitting was considered to be a very important aspect of support on the home front and women all over the country responded with an influx of knitted items. Knitting clubs were set up in every town and village and everyone from the elderly to wounded soldiers in hospitals were set to work winding wool into balls from skeins, knitting or packing the knitted 'comforts' to be dispatched.

Knitting wool at this time was much thinner and quite harsh in texture. It was mainly 4 ply pure wool supplied from New Zealand, Australia and Britain and was to ideally be khaki in colour. These homemade offerings not only provided warmth but also much appreciation by the troops and significantly lifted their morale. After the war in 1920 Lady Haversham erected a marble tablet in Easthampstead Parish Church in Bracknell (The Church of St Michael and St Mary Magdalene) as a memorial to all the men of the area who lost their lives in the war.

This hanging sculpture is made in response to this time, with machine and handknitted pieces including items handknitted using 1917 patterns from Olive Whitting's Khaki Knitting book. Numerous fragments of knitting express the quantity of items donated with some pieces still on the needles to illustrate they were handmade. Some pieces have been stitched with messages delivering encouraging support and comfort to the troops. The yarns used are mostly wool with some hand dyed using nettles, elderflower leaves, dock leaves and iron.

Left and top right photos by Tara Kennedy



DEB KING

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@ debkingdesign

As a handweaver Deb is fascinated by the transformation of thread into cloth. She works with carefully selected materials to make clothing, accessories, homewares and art works to treasure.

She is preoccupied with tactility and pays attention to the surface and the structure of the cloth she makes, its drape and weight, how it feels as well as how it looks. Her aesthetic is simple and timeless, and she often uses neutrals and muted colour palettes. She is inspired by the natural and the built environment as well as by the yarns themselves, their individual characteristics inform her designs as she works.

Her work for 'Reflections of South Hill Park' reimagines elements of the now often empty private rooms which were once filled with the lavish furnishings, decoration, possessions and emotions of its residents and visitors.



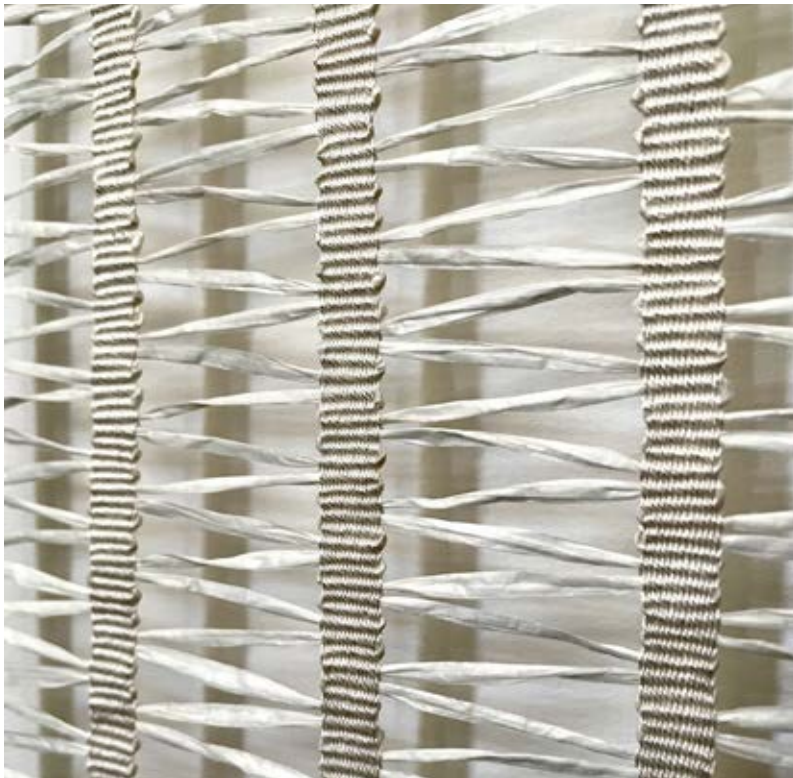


Overleaf:
Handwoven passementerie

Clockwise from left:
Molding detail at South Hill Park

Carved wood at South Hill Park

Spanish Lace



HOLD ON

Handwoven passementerie, an expanded interpretation of traditional woven braids that once adorned furnishings and clothing. Passementerie weaving begins with the production of long, hand-spun cords, here from very fine yarn. The cords are then individually placed in the warps to produce a three-dimensional structure.

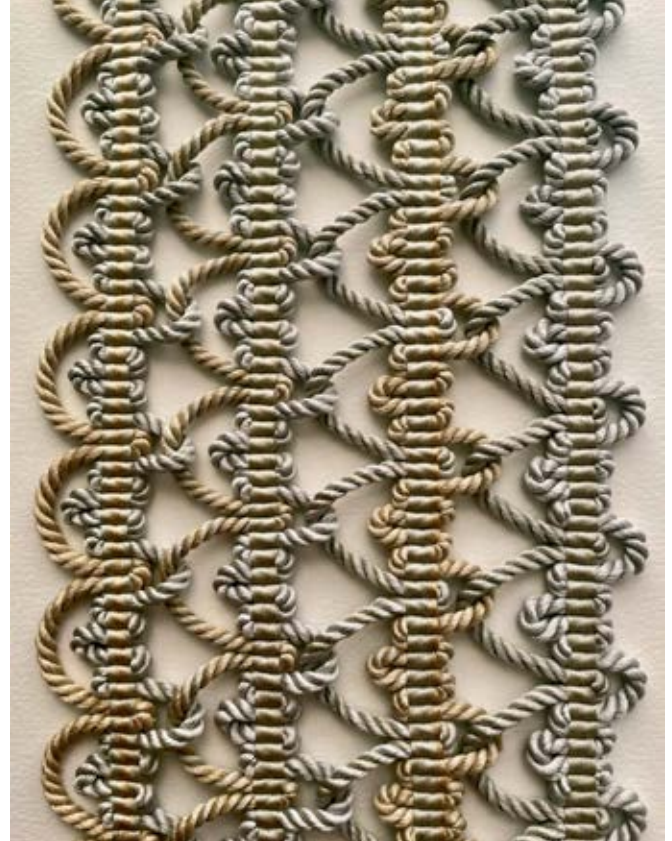


Clockwise from top:
Hold on detail
Passementerie weavings
Hold on development sample



GOLDEN

Handwoven passementerie, an expanded interpretation of traditional woven braids that once adorned furnishings and clothing. Passementerie weaving begins with the production of long, hand-spun cords, here from very fine yarn. The cords are then individually placed in the warps to produce a three-dimensional structure.



SEEING THROUGH

Handwoven Spanish lace, a traditional open weave technique requiring hand manipulation which sits at the crossroads between handweaving and passementerie weaving. The recycled waste silk fibres and spun silk warps produce a regular repeat and showcase the erratic beauty of this handmade yarn. Hand spun silk cords

Photos by Deb King

REFLECTIONS OF SOUTH HILL PARK BY DEB KING

Reborn 50 years ago as a place to meet, to be entertained and to nurture the artistic potential of new generations, South Hill Park has a full and rich history, present and future. It therefore felt strange when I visited that I was most struck not by the vibrant public areas but by the locked and empty private rooms with their signs of missing furniture and talk of ghosts.

These rooms, now often deserted and hushed, were once filled with people, their chatter and silence, their joy and sorrow, their everyday lives and their celebrations. They were also filled with furniture and possessions, the comfort of carpets and cloth, flamboyant clothing and opulent drapery. There are clues in the walls and ceilings, on the floors and in the air, the legacy of long dead craftsmen, the good times and the hard times that followed.

This abandoned decoration gives us clues to the intricate and lyrical patterns that once took centre stage and I found myself thinking that the flourishes in the carving and plaster would have been echoed in the fringes, braids and tassels of the furnishings and clothing of the inhabitants. Now seen as fussy and old fashioned passementerie was once a sign of luxury, wealth and status. Officially an endangered craft practiced by only a handful of professional weavers in the UK it offers rich possibilities and challenges for the handweaver. While weaving is generally characterised by a strict grid structure of warp and weft passementerie often sees threads taking a curved path around each other, free of the surface or even dangling from it. Another notable difference is that it relies on the hand of the maker physically taking those threads on their journeys and cannot be mechanised in the way that a length of cloth can be woven by machine.

The first step was to source very fine factory waste silk before carefully hand spinning bundles of threads to produce luxurious cords of various weights. These cords were then handwoven on a small un-mechanised loom into structures inspired by traditional forms. Displayed as hangings, or on their sides creating dramatic shadows, they are expanded versions of their predecessors, giving us a clearer view of their rhythms and complexities and recalling some of the lost luxury and grandeur of South Hill Park's traditional interiors and flamboyant inhabitants.



SEEING
THROUGH

GOLDEN

&

HOLD ON

Clockwise from
left:

Seeing through
Handwoven
Spanish lace -
Recycled sari
silk fibres and
spun silk

Golden
Handwoven
passementerie -
Hand spun silk
cords

Hold on
Handwoven
passementerie -
Hand spun silk
cords

GERALDINE LEWIS

@ gemmo_textiles

Geraldine is a textile artist who works with a variety of materials including traditional fabrics such as cotton and less conventional materials, polyester and copper. These materials give her a wide choice of expressing and interpretation of what she views in her local area in Hampshire and other places of interest visited over many holidays in France.

She uses her sewing machine for patching together material of all kinds, introducing free motion stitching to enhance a piece of work. She also uses hand-stitch to make pictorial pieces of textile art. She is also comfortable to embody contemporary art-work. Threads are her artists' pallet, much as a painter would use pastels, acrylic or oils to paint their picture, she uses her own textile tools to achieve the same aim as any artist.

Her ambition is to bring more awareness of textile art to a wider audience, promoting exhibitions which are purely of a textile structure at the heart of the collection as a manifestation of textile artists achievements.

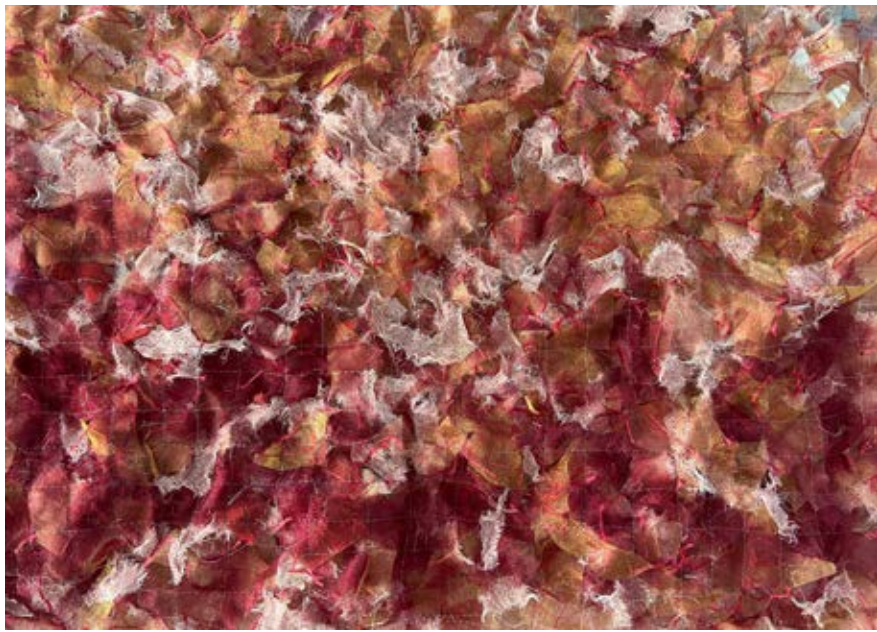


Left:
Collating inspiration
photographs of South Hill Park
and possible materials

Opposite page- clockwise
from top left:

South Hill Park windows

Materials created for
Metaphor - pieced and sewn
multicoloured organza



METAPHOR



Geraldine uses her patchwork and quilting techniques to produce textile art that can be placed for display on a wall. She uses conventional materials such as natural fibres like cotton and linen. She has introduced into her creative pieces less conventional materials like copper, polyester and non-natural fabrics, typically organza. These materials are now her preferred medium.

'Metaphor' depicts parts of the beautiful outside views of the garden. After his mother's death in 1889, Sir Arthur Divett Hayter (1835 to 1917) commissioned Temple Lushington Moore to redesign the mansion. Following on from the completion of the house Moore then went on to re-design the gardens.

The view of the garden, with the steps leading to the higher levels of the grounds, and the boundary brick wall to the left of the steps, are the areas Geraldine has used for her inspiration. The artwork depicts some of the beautiful outside views of the garden.

During the years of the Impressionists (1860 to 1886) their paintings were influenced by the colours they saw rather than the actual colours of the views they painted. If you look closely on a summers day you can see the wonderful shades that nature naturally provides for us to interpret in our own colour pallet. Geraldine's colour palette is created from a mixture of her materials and threads.



Clockwise from above:
Metaphor at South Hill Park

Metaphor detail showing watercolour background
and pieced patchwork inspired blocks

Metaphor detail - watercolour painting with stitched
organza sections created by stitching together
multiple pieces of different coloured organza.



ANNETTE MILLS

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Annette Mills works with basketry techniques and natural materials to make vessels and hangings which explore transitional spaces. Her practice is concerned with an artist's creative process. Through the use of the traditional basketry techniques of looping, braiding and twining she analyses her own creative process to explore concepts linked to transitional space, containment and displacement.

Annette works with a variety of plants which she can grow, harvest and forage: daffodils, iris, grasses, rush and willow. Her work emphasises the raw materials used and the slowness of the making. Her pieces complete themselves as they gradually relax and settle, finding their own point of balance.





This page:

Small pieces
and coiled
willow bark in
situ at South
Hill Park

Opposite page:

Natures
blanket on the
loom

Willow bark
small piece

SMALL PIECES

Small pieces made from
birch bark and willow bark
with jute and linen



Photos by Annette Mills

NATURE'S BLANKET

Blanket made from
willow bark, jute and
linen.



NATURE'S BLANKET

Over the years South Hill Park has adapted to the many needs of different groups of people. During the Second World War the Royal Sea Bathing Hospital of Margate in Kent was evacuated to this English country house. This hospital pioneered the use of open-air treatment for patients suffering from tuberculosis (TB).

This work references the blankets used by the patients as they took this rest cure based on hygiene, isolation, fresh air, exercise and good nutrition.

The blanket is made from willow bark, jute and linen and moulds to the body – encompassing and protecting. It represents the restorative nature of the outdoors and the extensive grounds of the estate.

These traditional materials were used extensively throughout the Second World War. Willow baskets were specifically designed for transporting blood plasma as well as artillery ammunitions; jute was made into hessian for sandbags; and linen used as covering for aircraft fuselage.



Left photo from
SHP Archive



JANET PULLEN

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Janet's practice reflects her appreciation of abstract artworks, in particular those in which shapes and the relationship between them, lines and blocks of colour are key features. Influences have largely been from the visual experience. Informal piecing of fabric is a favoured way of working, usually with natural fabrics and threads. Janet enjoys the tactile change as fabric is pieced and then stitched to stabilise and transform the whole. Stitching may be applied not only for joining fabrics, but to characterise a boundary, for mark making and to create concentrated areas of interest.

While patterns and shapes in the environment are inspirational sources, Janet is interested in the way in which textiles can support a narrative; the idea of the gesture of stitch which is unique – a signature mark; and the emotional and therapeutic aspects involved in the stitching process itself. She continues to be inspired by how much more there is to discover in the application of the three components – needle, thread and fabric – as the creative medium for expressing ideas and producing effects.



Activities at South Hill Park: Yoga Session 1, The Art Class, Yoga Session 2



YOGA SESSION 1 & YOGA SESSION 2

South Hill Park offers a variety of activities and events involving the visual, literary, and performing arts (including health and wellbeing). Janet has created 5 separate pieces of artwork highlight some of these individual practices. Fabric has been printed, pieced together and stitched in different ways.

Above and right photos by Janet Pullen



Left:
Yoga session 1

Above:
Yoga session 2 detail



JEWELLERY MAKING WORKSHOP

&

NEEDLECRAFT WORKSHOP

Activities at South
Hill Park

Above:
Jewellery Making
Workshop

Right:
Needlecraft
Workshop





THE ART CLASS

Clockwise
from left:

The Art Class

Needlecraft
Workshop
detail

Jewellery
Making
Workshop
detail



Previous
page and
above
photo
by Janet
Pullen

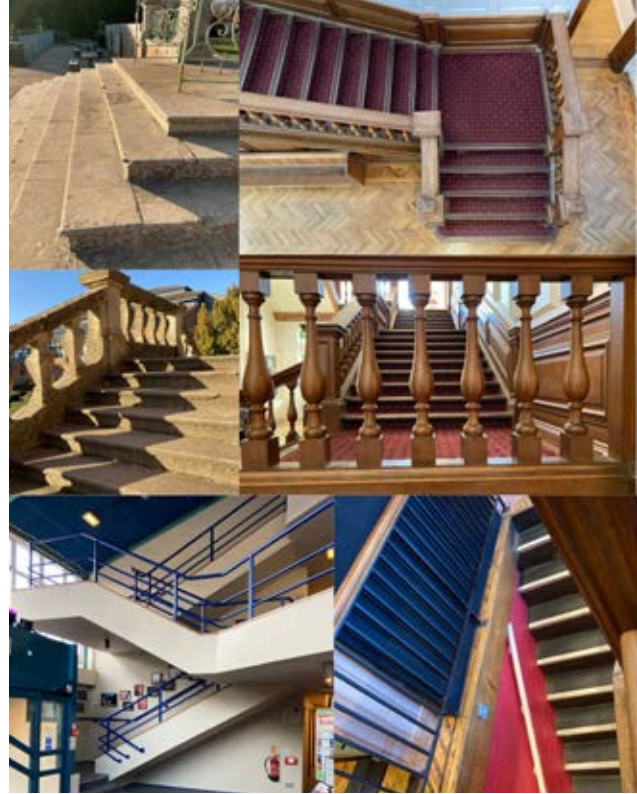
STAIRWAYS

The staircases in and around the buildings at South Hill Park are the inspirational sources for this artwork. The architectural elements, including steps, treads and railings, create interesting shapes and lines, especially when viewed from different angles.

Sets of stairs essentially provide the means for accessing different floor levels. Their unique spatial forms invite you to travel up or down. A “flight” of stairs implies travelling upwards; stairs as metaphors relate to journeys to different physical or mental places.

South Hill Park is celebrating 50 years as a community arts centre which offers facilities for and encouragement in a variety of art practices and events. Climbing stairs is an appropriate narrative for people taking part in a range of activities, as they seek to enrich their lives, improve their skills and learn from new experiences. The opportunities on offer enable them to keep climbing, embarking on new challenges and aspiring to new heights.

Combining the shapes and lines from different staircases provided the basis for the artwork, with colours largely informed by those areas. The process involved piecing dyed fabric (linen and cotton), using stitching to highlight particular features of the staircases. Superimposed within each section are designs inspired by some of those activities on offer: music, jewellery making, needlecrafts, yoga and pilates, dance, painting and drawing as well as film and theatre audiences.





DELIA SALTER

@ deliasalter

Delia's work in textiles is an expression of her personal connection to the land: its geography, natural history, human impact, myth and story. Using natural fibres, often dyed with plant material, she expresses a direct association with the location in which she finds herself.

Delia's usual technique is knitting but not to a pattern, developed to create a greater texture and a sense of the unconventional. She decides how each piece will develop as she works, from row to row, stitch to stitch.

However, it is not random. There is an understanding of how the finished work will appear and she works to achieve this by immersing herself in the action of making and responding to the material and the form it will eventually take.

Right:
View of South Hill Park parkland and house





Clockwise from left:
South Hill Park house from the
garden

A walk in the park in progress

Rosebay Willowherb with wool dyed
from the leaves



Photos by Delia Salter

A WALK IN THE PARK

A Walk in the Park is the result of dyeing wool with plants such as can be found at South Hill Park, and is a celebration of these botanic properties and the fact that the grounds attached to a historic house possess their own history and hold their own important heritage.

However, as with much art work relating to the land in these times, there is a degree of uncertainty and emotional unease (solastalgia) that is readily experienced when collecting plants to dye with, noticing particularly the decreasing numbers of insects that inhabit and feed on these plants. This unease is expressed in the holes and gaps, the broken and the irregular disorderedness in this work.

This page
A Walk in the Park detail
Right:
A walk in the Park





ELENA SPARKE

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At the fore-edge of the book, art and cloth become poetry...

Elena's work examines transversal points between art and language using semantic potential of cloth, and book form - as an idea and an artistic medium. Themes of private and universal identity, preservation of culture are central to her practice. Global cultural connection is perpetuated through heritage natural dyeing, timeless value of the handcrafted. Artistic inquiry through textile realm offers tactile alphabets reflecting complexity of humanness and nature. Resulting 'libraries of the mind' form imaginary landscapes of no boundaries, free to enter and populate, whether seeking a poetic departure or a deep, meaningful discussion. Emotionally invested, whimsical book sculptures invite the viewer to reflect on universal questions of life, memory, imperishability of culture and hope.



THE BOOK OF ALL & THE LAST BOOK BY ELENA SPARKE

Two presented textile book sculptures artistically examine utopian and dystopian scenarios. Juxtaposed realities serve both as a declaration of hope and a forewarning. Mytho-poetically approached, this narrative is placed at the intersection of cloth and language, considering books as keepers of knowledge, humans – as custodians of civilization and nature. Predominantly, the project does not seek direct historical or physical accuracy, rather – connecting ideas and realms. Some conceptual and physical aspects have been developed in the past two years, prior to distilling into site-specific reflection. However, an image of an Ice House on the grounds from Bracknell Library Archives has made a profound impression: seemingly an embodiment of light and darkness in my work, thus prompting a veiled interpretation in one of the ink hand drawings on silk in The Book of All.

Rich, encyclopaedic format of the first sculpture and the dark reality of the second invite to think globally, unravelling opposing realities through ancient book form and cloth. Having grown up with complex geographies, vastness of physical landscape and cultural hybridity, I am naturally concerned with perpetual contradiction of humankind – painfully observing our tragically destructive tendencies alongside impassioned desire for cultural growth, appreciation of nature, beauty and the need to preserve them. In that stance, within a wider cultural framework, my inquiry cogently placed at a historical cultural centre of note intrinsically connects with its work representing and celebrating culture. Are the children of tomorrow to bask in kaleidoscopic wonder? Or are they to inherit The Last Book?



Left: Hand-stitch work in progress on one of 13 double signatures for The Book of All textile artist book sculpture.

Far left: The Last Book open scroll book sculpture. Antique hand-woven Eastern European linen, Kakishibu dye, Handmade inks, Natural Indigo dye, Linen yarn, Linen. Handmade.

THE BOOK OF ALL & THE LAST BOOK

Elena's unique approach to natural dyeing creates complex chromatic transitions, inadvertently echoing the Italian Garden, surrounding woodland and time-inscribed exterior of the magnificent building, new and ancient at once. These contemporary echoes and brushstrokes of history form a palimpsest of voices and a bewitching tongue of their own. Nature, humanness and time - woven together.

Painstakingly handmade, aesthetically both sculptures resemble artefacts, to further accentuate shared cultural heritage as a true, universally understood treasure and a way of communication. The use of natural materials and dyes highlights her fascination with juxtaposing raw nature and the finesse, beguiling beauty they offer through transformation of handcrafting.

Artistic references to marbling, gilding, embossing and Coptic binding connect to ancient book arts, anchoring artist books' realm to heritage and simultaneously subverting by placing inquiry into textile medium with its seismic semantic potential, predating emergence of alphabetical systems.



The Book of All at South Hill Park
Handwoven hemp, silk, linen and silk
yarns, Natural dyes, Handmade Natural
inks, Stitch, Hand-drawing on silk.
Handmade.



The Book of All, Fish skin leather open book cover.
Textile artist book sculpture. Fish skin leather, Bees Wax, Linen Yarn, Natural
Dyes, Handmade Natural Inks, 23 ct Genuine Gold Leaf.

Above photo by Matthew Burch Photography

THE BOOK OF ALL



Above: Artistically interpreting the Ice House photograph from Bracknell Library Archives. Handwoven hemp, silk, linen and silk yarns, Natural dyes, Handmade Natural inks, Stitch, Hand-drawing on silk. Handmade.

Right: Inspirational image of the Ice House FA45 Ice House, South Hill Park, Bracknell (2013) <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bracknellforest>





Top left:
The book of All detail
from a single page

Above and left:
The Book of All at South
Hill Park
Handwoven hemp, silk,
linen and silk yarns,
Natural dyes, Handmade
Natural inks, Stitch,
Hand-drawing on silk.
Handmade.

ELENA SPARKE

CLARE SPENDER

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I am fascinated by fabric, how a flat piece of woven fibre can be change by binding, distorting, dying, boiling, folding, how it's structure can be change so dramatically to the point it is unrecognisable.

I am inquisitive and always asking 'why', give me a piece of fabric and the first thing I will probably do is try and burn it, twist it, cut it up and then cover it in thread. During my masters I questioned many of my making methods and began to explore different pathways linking my then current role as Conversation Assistant, working within historic houses, and handling objects and began to weave elements within my textiles.

Dust has now become part of my making process when creating textiles or site-specific projects like this one for 'Reflections of South Hill Park'. I use dust in much the same way as I would use a printing or stitching technique. This is a material that can be applied, stitched and bound within the fabrics I use.

But it is also more than just a material, this dust bound within my work connects me and my making process directly to the past, whether this is yesterday's dust of dust that have been removed from an object that has not been cleaned for many years, or even lifted from under floorboards that have not been lifted for 100's of years.





Opposite page:

Dust circle
sample 3

Dust circle
sample 6

This page:

Dust Cloth -
Connecting the
Past in situ at
South Hill Park

DUST CLOTH - CONNECTING THE PAST

The dust used in this piece has been collected from a Hoover bag used when cleaning the site of South Hill Park. This physical link with South Hill Park is also linked to memories I have of working here in 2002 when the Art Centre was undergoing a lottery project for re-development. My memory is one of plastic sheeting sealing of the hidden spaces which were being worked on, lots of noise and much dust seemed to circle us as we moved through the spaces working on the programme for the re-opening ceremony.

I have decided to create a long length of fabric, using 10m of silk chiffon, bound using a punching technique to create my recollections from 2002 of the plastic coverings moving as people and wind brushed through the building making it waft quietly all day.

I have created 263 dust circles to represent each year since the building was owned and re-modelled by William Watts in 1760. Selecting 50 dust circles to embellish with gold leaf to represent the 50 years that South Hill Park is celebrating this year.



Above:
Dust Cloth - Connecting the Past detail

Opposite page:
Dust Cloth - Connecting the Past in situ at
South Hill Park



CLARE SPENDER 77

JENNIFER SUTTON

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Jennifer is an artist who specialises in knitted artworks and is based in Hampshire. Jennifer uses a manual standard gauge domestic knitting machine to produce sculptural fabrics and objects.

She is inspired by the process of knitting on the machine and develops pieces which are a progression on her previous work. She captures moments and instances of inspiration through the photographs she takes. She prefers to be inspired organically, so she takes photographs as the moments arise, and then allows these to permeate her work subconsciously. She tends to start knitting and allow the photographs to reemerge within her work.

Jennifer is inspired by the musical structure of 'variations on a theme' (such as Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Variations'), whereby she devises an initial theme in response to her photographs, and then develops this theme into further works. She works methodically, utilising tools such as the Punnett Square to devise potential permutations.





Opposite page:
Machine knitted sculptural fabric

Above:
Erstwhile in situ at South Hill Park

Left photo by Jennifer Sutton

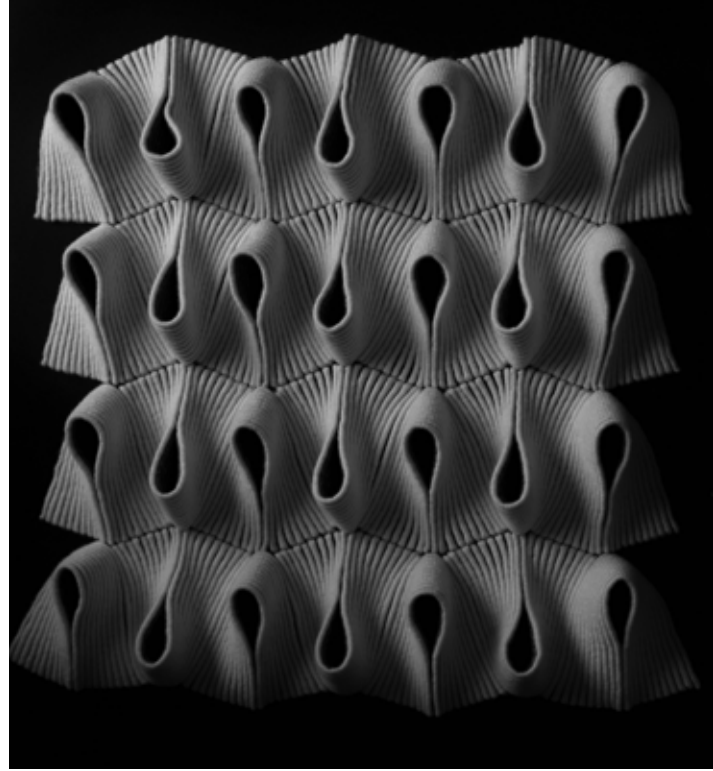
ERSTWHILE

For her current collection of work, Jennifer has been inspired by her visit to South Hill Park; in particular the wooden flooring in the 'Garden Room'.

The floor in a room is unique, the owner comes to learn where the creaky floorboards are, and where to step to move through the room undetected. The floor is not kind to strangers.

The house has become busy with visitors, the floor has to try harder to quiet the noise, wooden tiles warp and lift, catching the visitor's shoes.





Opposite page:
Erstwhile vessels

Left:
Erstwhile photograph

Above:
Erstwhile wall hanging

Photos by Jennifer Sutton

BETH TOWN

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Born and raised in Scotland, Art was one of Beth's first loves, but she took a more academic path at first, focusing on science and spending her 20's as a Warfare Officer in the Royal Navy. On leaving the Royal Navy she went back to her creative roots, initially working as a chef before returning to university to study a diploma in Art and then a BA. She spent a year as Artist in Residence and then returned to gain a MA in Textiles.

Textile thinking informs much of her work, and she loves to play with alternative materials, combining these with traditional techniques. At the core of Beth's work is a fascination with light and shadow, and she seeks out materials and processes that capture these elements. She believes that light and shadow are symbiotic and there is true beauty to be found in the shadows. Beth works to capture the duality of life and nature within her pieces, the light and dark, the strength and fragility.

Beth lives North Wales with her Husband, toddler son and dog. She splits her time between making, motherhood and home renovations.



Top:

Selecting materials. Beth's new work needed something strong to support the wire lace. Silk paper is strong and Beth can make it to whatever size she needs while playing with its transparency by carefully applying thick and thin layers.

Bottom:

Past, Present, Future in progress. Stitching with pure silk onto Present as the rest of the triptych waits below.



Opposite page
left to right:

Knitting Vaulted. Beth knits and crochets garments, toys and accessories in her spare time. In vaulted she has brought this experience into her art.

Past in progress.
Crocheted wire. Small metal hooks are used with wire but the process is the same as crocheting with yarn.

Photos by Beth Town



VAULTED

Vaulted is inspired by the architecture of South Hill Park and the Italian garden designed by architect Temple Moore. In the Italian garden, Temple Moore carved straight lines and geometry from nature through considered planting.

Beth has sought to mirror this in Vaulted, combining British Cheviot wool with pleated handknitting techniques and her own pattern to create a structural knitted sculpture that holds its shape yet still retains its softness.





Opposite page:
Vaulted detail

Left:
Vaulted in situ at South Hill Park

Above:
The hidden details - back of
vaulted

Previous page and above
photos by Beth Town

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE



In Past, Present, Future Beth reflects on the history of South Hill Park, from its origins as a stately home, to an arts and crafts centre in the 1970s where crochet and lace were taught from its inception, to today where we celebrate 50 years and look forward to the bright future of the beautiful South Hill Park.

The triptych is made from hand formed silk paper, silk thread stitch work and ivory coloured copper wire.

Past features hairpin lace and a crochet design, inspired by a 1915 doily pattern, representing the past of South Hill Park and Beth's early exposure to crochet.

Present is formed from hairpin lace with 3D elements and star burst stitches representing the bright present of South Hill Park and reflecting Beth's current work with hairpin lace.

Future features concentric rings of hairpin lace. Not yet written, it is full of possibilities.



Clockwise from top left:
Past

Present

Future

Previous page:
Past, Present, Future and
Vaulted in situ at South Hill
Park

Left photos by Elena Sparke

JANICE WEBB

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Janice's practice includes translating the experience of visiting spaces such as historic buildings, museums and galleries into abstract screen printed, stitched or three-dimensional objects that carry an essence of the atmosphere of the place. Open door shapes, often repeated in the printed textiles, can represent thresholds and become symbolic transitional spaces that give glimpses of what may lie beyond. Often, the reflections of movement, captured in mirrors and windows, express the presence of visitors in the spaces and is embedded in the design work. Information is gathered through photography, collage and sketches, then translated into surface design and pattern. The abstracted information of movement, colour, shape and perspective is committed onto textile surfaces.

Janice is currently working with natural dye extracts and other plant-based materials to make the dyed and printed work, some of this grown in her garden, and she continues to work in this more sustainable way, experimenting with process and using natural materials wherever possible.

Top photos:

Natural dyes and
screenprinting on silk

Bottom photos:

Inspiration images taken at
South Hill park

Photos by Janice Webb





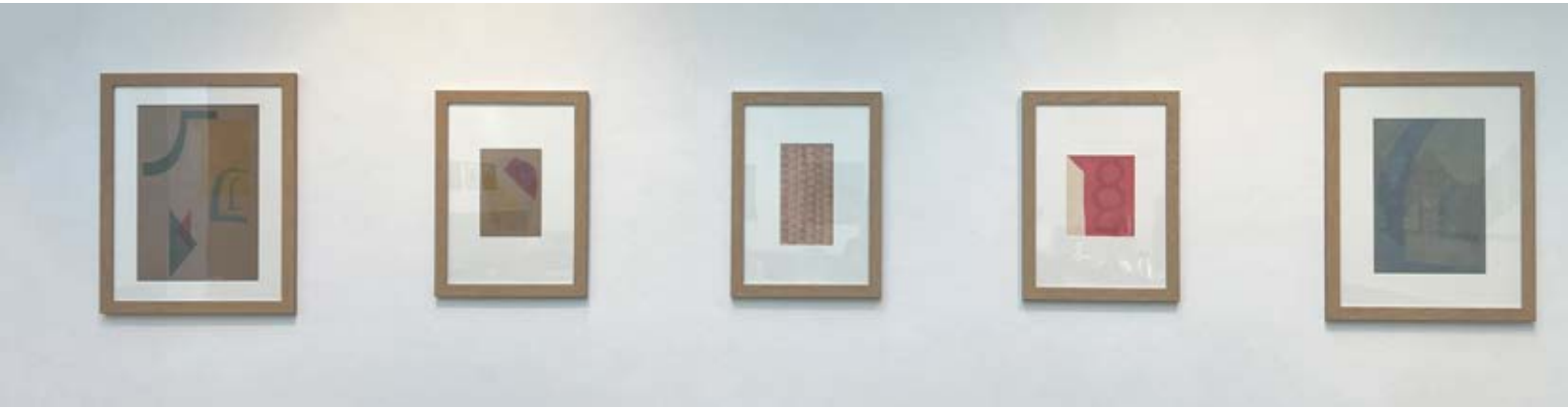
THRESHOLDS

The printed textiles are translations of an experience of visiting South Hill Park to celebrate its 50 years as an Arts Centre and are designed to evoke an atmosphere of the place.

The open door shapes seen in the work, including a curious 'Alice door', are repeated in the textiles and represent thresholds that give glimpses of what may lie beyond. Often, the reflections of movement, captured in mirrors and windows, express the presence of visitors in the spaces and are embedded into the design work, along with colour, pattern and texture.

Linen, silk and organic cotton fabric has been hand dyed with flowers cultivated in Janice's garden, including Rudbeckia, Black Hollyhock and Calendula Officinalis. They are screen printed through hand cut stencils with natural dye extracts of Buckthorn, Brazilwood, Saxon Blue, Cutch and Chlorophyllin. Alum and Gallnut mordants have been used to help the dyes attach to the fibres.





Above and right:
Thresholds in situ
at South Hill Park

Opposite page:
Hand dyed linen,
cotton and silk,
screen printed
with natural dye
extracts.

Previous page and
right photo by
Janice Webb



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition has been a collaborative effort between many individuals and groups.

We would like to especially thank:

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Terry Donaldson for photographing the works in situ and collating the images.

CURATOR

Loucia Manopoulou

GUEST ARTIST

Frances Geesin

CATALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs not individually credited are by Terry Donaldson

CATALOGUE GRAPHIC DESIGN AND PHOTO EDITING

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