

CETG ARCHIVE

Meeting Report

9th April 2018

Speaker: Rosie James

Talk: Stitch, draw, drawing in textile art.

[Rosie James](#) describes herself on her website as a "textile artist drawing with a sewing machine". She gets her main inspiration from crowds and large groups of people.

Rosie started out as a radiographer and studied City & Guilds Fabric Dying and Printing (a two year course), then continued by taking a Degree at Farnham University in Printed Textiles - there was no sewing involved in either course and she didn't like using a sewing machine.

She then started a business making hand-printed textiles; cushions, scarves etc. but didn't find this enjoyable.

After working as a Learning Assistant she then took an MA in Fine Art Textiles at Goldsmith's which she loved. She was very interested in the Minimalist Artists and the materials they used and re-created some of their works for her MA show. Rosie then taught Fine Art for a time whilst exhibiting her own work. The Local Authority asked her to teach a machine embroidery course, so she took a course herself using old Bernina machines and loved it.

The starting point for Rosie was "copying" the way in which artists draw using pen and pencil but using the sewing machine to draw with instead. The Bayeux Tapestry she describes as telling a story in stitch which people have been doing for generations and that is what she aims to do with her work.

Rosie has been inspired by many artists and has re-created many artists' work but in fabric and stitch. For example, Carl Andre (American artist): Rosie made her version of one of his works by making a block of 120 bricks out of foam covered in fabrics and she also produced a pattern for this. She continued by producing another piece inspired by Richard Serra's (American artist) "Trip Hammer" and again re-created this in foam.

Further into her machine embroidery journey she copied Albrecht Durer's life drawing "hand" in stitch although in a large format. She left the threads attached to the "drawing" which has become a feature of her work.

All of Rosie's work starts with a photograph. She takes lots of photos of lots of people, mainly crowds. She is observant and looks at/studies people. She then selects certain people from the photographs, enlarges the image and prints it onto A4 in black and white - she reduces the photograph to outlines.

Each person is traced onto a separate square of silk organza in pencil, the square

is hand-stitched onto a white background fabric and then machined over with black polyester thread.

A favourite artist and inspiration, due to his many pictures depicting crowd scenes, is Pieter Bruegel and Rosie has recreated a section of one of his paintings in stitch.

Rosie often photographs people at museums. She uses screen printing in a lot of her current work; often screen printing buildings and then stitching people in front - both together in one piece. In more recent commissions for hotels, she has used this technique to great effect.

Rosie has created life-size pieces, stitching panels of people "Crowd Cloud", the idea of this coming from getting pieces ready for an exhibition in Stafford. She found she could include much more detail in larger work. This piece has travelled the World (without Rosie) and is currently in Japan.

As mentioned earlier, Rosie likes leaving loose threads on her work and this is a definite feature of her designs. Sometimes she pulls threads across her pieces in one direction for a different look and sometimes she uses grids of threads.

Rosie is an extremely talented artist, inspiring us with what is possible with just a sewing machine, fabric and thread. Thank you to Rosie for sharing her stunning work with us.



Liz Smith's announcements at the meeting

Workshops

This month's workshop was a great success. Some of the pieces of work are on display at the back of the hall. Marilyn Pipe had us all very busy so we didn't have time to finish all the pieces. Unfortunately Nicola Jarvis is now unable to do a June workshop for us but a wonderful alternative is being planned so keep the date, 30th June, in your diaries.

Group outings

The RSN trip will be on Wednesday 18th July. Again I apologise to all of you that work. They did not offer the tour on a Saturday. Please sign up for the trip on the sheet at the back of the hall. If you can pay £20 (estimate depending on numbers) today that would be wonderful, as all payments have to be in by the end of May.

Aylesbury Vale Embroiderer's Guild (AVEG)

Please see AVEG's list of current exhibitions.