

CETG ARCHIVE

Meeting Report

12th September 2016

Speaker: Wendy Dolan

Wendy Dolan gave an enthusiastic talk on Art, Architecture and Stitch discussing her inspiration drawn from architectural detail, her methods and some of her large commissioned works. As a child she had always loved fabric and embroidery and went on to take a B.Ed in Art and Textiles specialising in freehand machine embroidery. She draws inspiration from the natural world as well as buildings and artists. Particular favourites are Venetian Gothic, the work of Antoni Gaudi in Barcelona, and the Brighton Pavilion, as well as weathered textures and natural curves. She showed a series of photographs of architectural details, pointing out areas which could be interpreted in stitch.

Her method is to create a textured surface, white on white in natural cotton fabrics, adding more texture through extra braid, lace, ironed on horticultural fleece and other textural media. The next step is to add paint following a pattern she has created in torn paper collage and tracing paper. She then machine stitches the detail from the reverse of the work - never in black, usually very dark blue, green or grey - with thicker yarns in the bobbin. Additional hand stitching is done to suggest detail in seeding or fly stitch. The paint she uses is screen printing ink which is water based and iron-fixed, and viscous enough not to spread too much on the fabric.

Wendy also described some large commissioned works she did: two [theatre curtains](#) for a cruise liner which were applied to velour and had to be completely fire proofed - which caused a number of technical problems. She was also commissioned to create a wall hanging commemorating the Millennium for Ashridge Management College, which took nearly 4 years to complete. "[Aspiring Arches](#)" is 27ft x 11ft and the border was completed by over 75 staff members, many of whom had done very little stitching before. Wendy worked with Jae Maries to design and create the hanging which included architectural details from the estate, dating back to its origins as a monastery. The involvement of large numbers of principally novice stitchers made this a challenging but ultimately rewarding work.

Wendy offers a number of courses both in the UK and in France and Spain, and her new book "Layer, Paint and Stitch" is now available.

We had a number of visitors including Juliette Orton who gave us a talk earlier in the year. She has also written about Wendy's talk on her [blog](#).



Janet reminded us of the upcoming AGM at the October meeting where new committee members will need to be appointed to the posts of

Chairman and Minutes Secretary. We have a volunteer for the post of Treasurer, who will shadow Sue before taking on the post full time in 2017. However, as this has created a vacancy for the Library, we will need to find a volunteer or arrange a rota. Anyone wishing to put themselves (or someone else) forward should contact Janet before the next meeting as without a Chairman the Group will have to close. This would be a great shame as we have a stunning programme of speakers arranged for 2017.

Reminders included the John Gillow talk about Islamic Textiles mentioned in the [previous scrapbook](#), a new exhibition at Bucks County Museum on print making ([see details here](#)), and Janet's upcoming series of workshops at [Workaid](#). The Gone to Pieces Quilt Group are holding an exhibition of patchwork and quilting on 22nd - 23rd October from 10.00am to 4.00pm at Coleshill Village Hall. More details from g2pquilters@gmail.com.

All photos © Liz Smith