

embroidery

THE TEXTILE ART MAGAZINE

July August 2017
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PICTURE PERFECT

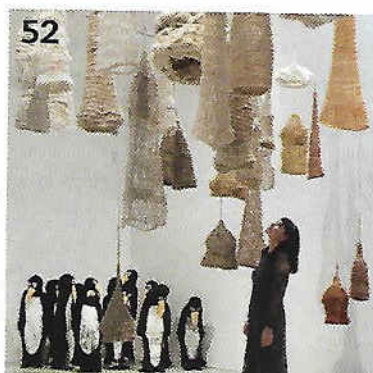
*Nettie Rowsell's
portraits
in stitch*

MAXINE SUTTON
Quiet conversations
in thread

ZOË HILLYARD
The art of ceramic
patchwork

ALICE FOX
Locating textiles
in nature



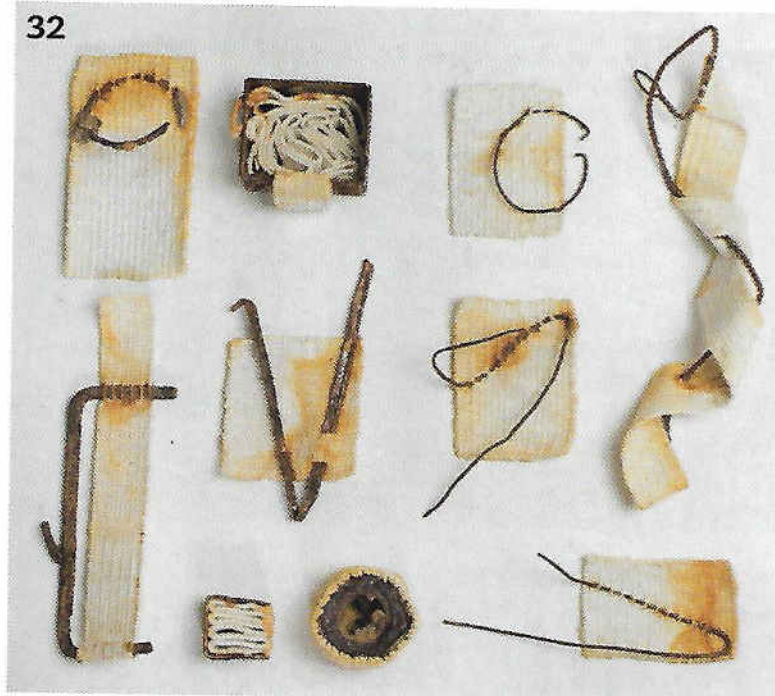


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It was fascinating to interview Zoë Hillyard, Maxine Sutton and Alice Fox for this issue. Three very different makers, they each developed a unique practice by following their instincts and exploring the materials, techniques and concepts they were drawn to. Often it is only in retrospect that we can see how our past experiences have played a pivotal role in bringing us to where we are now. When we are starting out, it's much harder to predict where we might end up. Just how do you work out which strand of your creative practice to develop? Or where to start with a new piece of work? It's a question I posed to Hillyard during our meeting and she shared the process she uses when working with undergraduates to encourage them to explore and experiment going in different directions before bringing things together (you can read about it on the 3 June 2016 entry on her blog zoehillyard.blogspot.co.uk). Each of the artist's stories in this issue is unique and we are fortunate to feature a piece by reader Nettie Rowsell on this month's cover too. Whatever the summer holds, we hope you find inspiration amongst our pages to will ensure it's a creative one.

johall
EDITOR

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ON THE COVER

Nettie Rowsell,
Josie, 2017
Stranded cotton on
canvas. 21 x 30cm

THE EMBROIDERERS' GUILD

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DEADLINES

EDITORIAL

ISSUE DATE	DEADLINE
Nov Dec 2017	3 July 2017
Jan Feb 2018	25 Sept 2017
Mar Apr 2018	27 Nov 2017

ADVERTISING

ISSUE DATE	ARTWORK DEADLINE
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Nov Dec 2017	2 Oct 2017
Jan Feb 2018	27 Nov 2017

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Stitched Voices

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Wales 25 March – 13 June 2017

A TECHNICIAN IS ADJUSTING ONE of the exhibits in Aberystwyth's Arts Centre's Gallery One. The clanking creak of his ladder, drag of his toolbox and the intermittent banging of his hammer are ricocheting off the walls and floor. With a title like *Stitched Voices* there is an expectation of silence. All noise, all clamour mutely, if not altogether safely, contained. Not so, for along with the technician's jarring clatter there are two videos running concurrently sending out a hum of barely discernible speech. Gallery One is a big space and initially the 50 or so hung and suspended textiles, primarily of a domestic scale, seem rather lost and out of place.

Comprising quilts, wall hangings, handkerchiefs and arpilleras (three-dimensional patchwork pictures) from the International Conflict Textiles Collection, it is the show's colour and pattern that first seduces. The arpilleras, originally made by Chilean women as a response to the atrocities committed during Pinochet's

dictatorship (though this show also features ones from Spain, Ireland and Columbia) delight with a kindergarten guilelessness. The endlessly repeated motifs of jaunty, dancing people, simple triangular-roofed houses, lollipop trees, pointy mountains and meandering rivers offered up on a flat, two-dimensional plane are rendered with found scraps of bright-hued, floral-printed cotton, rayons and wool.

But they belie the real horror. It's the titles – *The Long Wait of the Mourning Women*, *Fasting*, *There is a Coup D'état* and *Women Chained to the Parliament Gates* – set beneath such artlessness that catch the breath. And there is the prettifying. *Torture Chamber*, an appliquéd drawing of faceless pink bodies caged, chained to chairs, racks or hanging from a noose, is delicately fringed with a scalloped-edge of red crochet.

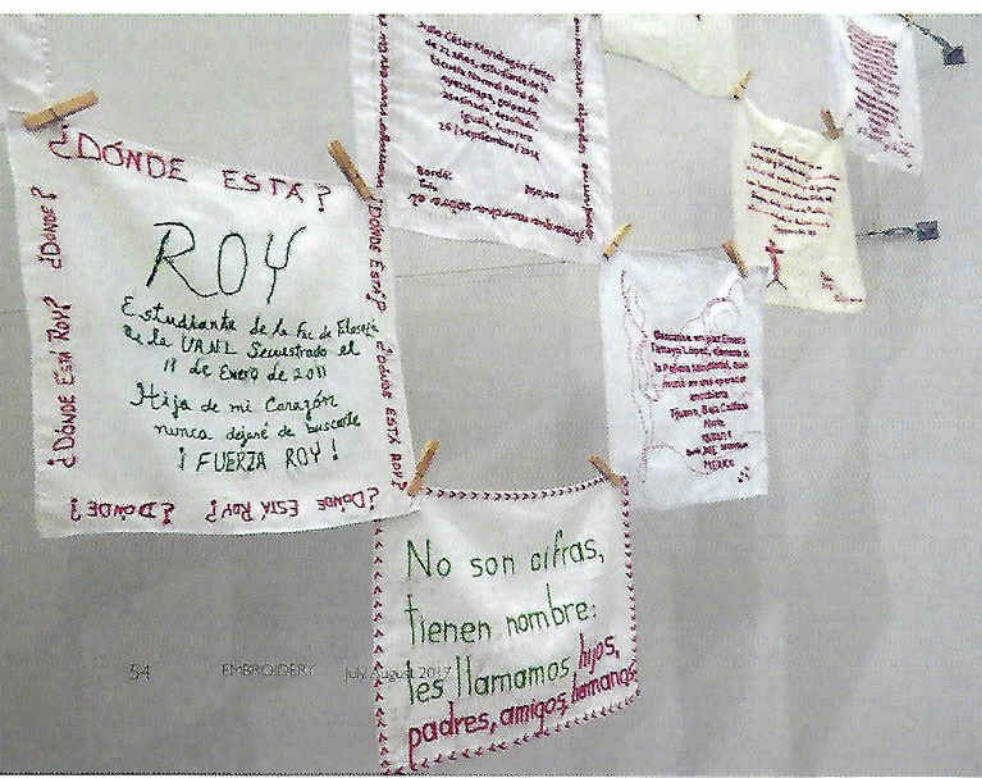
A girl of eight or nine in paisley leggings, her plaits swinging, skips into the gallery. Stopping abruptly she walks up to the work. Taking

each one in turn, her hands clasped tight behind her back, she is rapt. Her mother, a stripe of crème-de-menthe green in her hair, is looking at a washing line of 14 clothes-pegged handkerchiefs. In 2011 the Fuentes Rojas (the Red Fountains) began embroidering memorial handkerchiefs in a Mexico City Square for the 26,000 people who were killed or 'disappeared' as a result of President Felipe Calderón's 2006 'war on drugs'.

Though a minute sample of the thousands made, the ones here ache with aesthetically ingenuous poignancy. '¿Dónde está Roy?' asks one. Another has a hand-sewn drawing of a man's face. Others have crosses, dates, and the word 'paz' stitched over and over again. Though clearly analogous with handkerchiefs worked by incarcerated Suffragettes in the early 1900s, there is something more immediate, more heart-rending, about these painstakingly stitched remembrances. And the translations make for harrowing reading.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Philomela, her tongue severed, uses what is to hand and weaves the story of her rape, beautifully. Horror made palatable. Just as with the arpilleras, one is lulled into safety, drawn near by such bright, hand-me-down-lusciousness. But like the dolls given to abused children to help them articulate their hurt, it is a brightness that chills.

Ellen Bell



Gallery installation of Mexican memorial handkerchiefs produced by the Fuentes Rojas (the Red Fountains) and the Embroidering for Peace movement