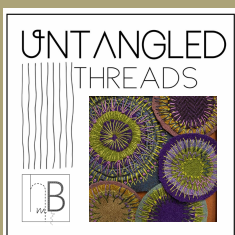


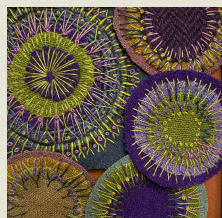


A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS WORKSHOP NOTES

Project 1

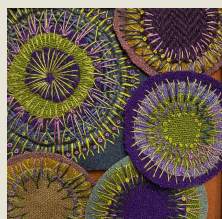
a shared vision 2025





A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

WORKSHOP NOTES



CONTENTS

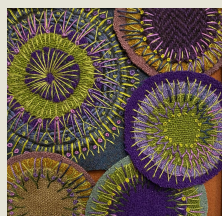
Section ONE: Group Project

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WORKSHOP VIDEO

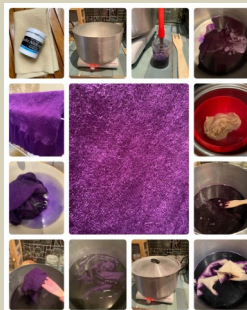
The workshop video is an integral part of the project. In it, I talk in very broad terms about the history of penny rugs and the tradition/necessity for recycling old fabric. I then take a look at:

- how you might get started;
- how you might interpret the theme;
- how you might develop your ideas; and
- how you might eventually pull these ideas together into a resolved piece of work.

The video begins with step-by-step instructions showing you how to complete your contribution to the GROUP PROJECT. This will hopefully provide you with a starting point for developing your own ideas. I also revisit a few techniques which you may find useful when interpreting this theme.



Wool Pennies
Research Stitchbook



WORKSHOP KITS

For the GROUP PROJECT

Pieces of pre-dyed wool fabric in shades of green, brown and purple, together with co-ordinating threads and yarns. Plus two chenille needles.



For your own PROJECT

I have offered a variety of different coloured dyed (wool) blanket, some threads, yarns and an A6 sketchbook and 2 pencils. You should NOT be limited by this selection! You might choose to use these or not: re-dye them, add to them, or start with your own selection **There are no rules for this part of the project .. just that you have taken inspiration from ideas around the recycling of old woollen cloth.**



the
collective
UNTANGLED THREADS

INTRODUCTION

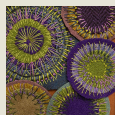
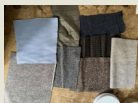
As a group, part of our focus has been on looking at different ways of recycling and reusing old fabric.



Over time, I noticed that the bulk of the fabric which I inherited from Janilaine's collection is tweed, boiled wool and blankets: fabrics which aren't easily incorporated into other work, and because of that, I have largely overlooked it. *We did make fabulous use of one of her blankets*

in the 'Primordial Soup' work, but this only made a very small dent in the supply! So, this first project for the new look collective, is an attempt to take a new look at old wool.

There were several tweed jackets in the collection, and it amused me to notice that Janilaine's scissors had been hard at work 'cutting useable but fairly random sections'.



- The first part of this workshop takes you as far as the **GROUP PROJECT**. This is the piece of work which you have committed to complete and return by 24/3/25



- The second part is the **INDIVIDUAL PROJECT**. This is where you begin to develop your own ideas using what you have learned from the group project. I show you some possibilities/starting points for your own research, and also show you how you might like to display/record some of your ideas in the form of a sketchbook or stitchbook. **This is the real essence of what we are trying to achieve. It may take a leap of faith .. you need to trust yourself.**

- The last section is **SHOW & TELL**. It is an important part of the whole project that you share what you have done with the rest of the group. You may end up with a consolidated, finished piece of work. You may like to submit your samples with a few notes, OR, this time, you may just write a few lines saying why you found it too difficult to submit anything .. we can all learn from each other .. so let's get started this is NOT a competition, there are no prizes!

FELTED OR FULLED?

The question 'Is it wool-felt or felted wool?' might seem a bit daft or a bit pedantic, but actually there is a huge difference between the two, and the answer will affect both the end-use and the way it which the fabric handles.

FELTING is a process you do with loose fibres

FULLING is a process you do with woven or knitted fabric



In this workshop we are using **FULLED** wool fabric. If you look closely at the surface or edges of a sample of fabric, you will be able to tell whether the yarn or fibres were originally laid, woven or knitted before the felting or fulling process.

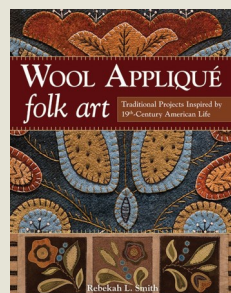
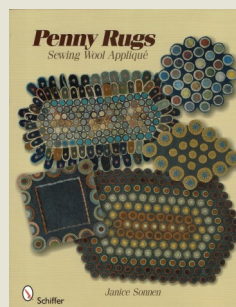
Fulled fabric sold by the meter is sometimes called **BOILED WOOL**.

HISTORY OF PENNY RUGS

I found 2 useful books: 'Penny Rugs' by Janice Sonnen (ISBN: 978-0-7643-3467-2) and 'Wool Applique folk art' by Rebekah L Smith (ISBN: 978-1-60705-969-1), both of which gave me a good introduction into the stitching done by rural American women in 1800s, and how the tradition and designs have continued. *The wool applique book actually has far more inspirational images and information.*

Although the name 'rug' may imply that these were intended for use on the floor, the term was used for a coverlet (on a bed or a throw for your knees.) Penny Rugs were made from scraps of material, and the name 'penny' comes from the use of a coin as a template.

Rugs constructed from layered circles were mostly made around the end of the Civil War, and the more ornate rugs, with birds, trees, animals, stars and flowers were more usual throughout the 1900s. The cut shapes were generally sewn on top of each other using blanket stitch. When the shapes had been stitched together, they were added to a backing layer of wool fabric, and then sometimes, also onto a further softer cotton backing, rather like a quilt.



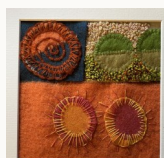
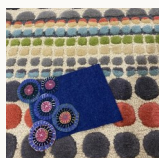
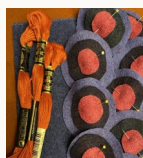
A MODERN INTERPRETATION

Time spent sewing used to be one of the only opportunities women had to be 'usefully occupied' but still free to think their own thoughts.

Things are very different today, but I still cherish the time which I can spend mindfully stitching.

You can see that my phone case is not dissimilar to some of the more traditional 'applique' designs, and that it also has some relation to the idea of Japanese Boro, in that whenever part of the case becomes worn, I stitch another section over the top.

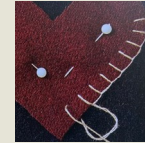
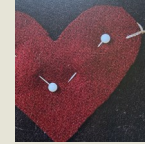
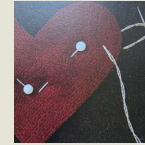
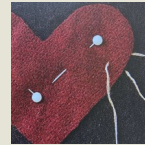
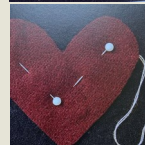
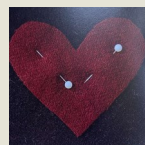
I love the idea that together, as a group, we can stitch creatively. Shapes which we could stitch onto a 'rug' or 'hanging' need not be regular or formal in their layout. If we just stick to a united colour theme, it would be wonderful to see what happens. Rather like the idea of the 'Primordial Soup' quilt, or the Butterfly Squares, if we all make 3 'pennies' it will be the same output as one person stitching nearly 200, but with so many variations!



GROUP PROJECT



- **Just use the materials in your Group Project Workshop Kit.** You DON'T have to use them ALL, but please don't add anything.
- Make a few 'pennies' with 3 or 4 layers of fabric making up each one. The shapes you cut DO NOT NEED to be circular, nor does the finished penny.
- I would recommend keeping your main shapes fairly simple. You should begin by pinning then blanket stitching around the edges of your shapes to unite the layers. If you need a refresher on how to form blanket stitch, take a look at the workshop video or the RSN stitchbank. www.rsnstitchbank.org





Your 'pennies' can be as simply decorated as you choose. (Or as complicated as you like!) You can stitch in regular patterns or in a completely random fashion.

Ideally I would like you to make at least 3 pennies each, but if you have more time, and the inclination, you could make as many as you can cut from the fabric and stitch with the yarn in the kit.

Please note that whatever the shape of the outside edge of your penny, IT SHOULD NOT BE EDGED WITH BLANKET STITCH.

Once all the decorated pennies are returned to me, they will be communally stitched onto a backing fabric by visitors to the gallery in MAY and JUNE.

The finished piece of work will be photographed for publicity and then raffled online to raise funds for MIND.



— — — NO STITCHING

..... blanket stitch

..... any stitches

While you are making the pennies, it would be great if you could use the time to stitch mindfully. Focus on the rocking of the needle, the thread passing in and out of the fabric, the patterns you are making. Think about the project and what working as part of group means to you. Focus on the process of stitching.

Please remember to set any offcuts of woollen fabric or ends of threads to one side. You will see that you can use these as a 'starting point' for the next part of the workshop.

I am hoping to use this first GROUP PROJECT as an example/experiment to see what happens when no design instructions are offered to a group, just the continuity of the materials used.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR OWN PROJECT

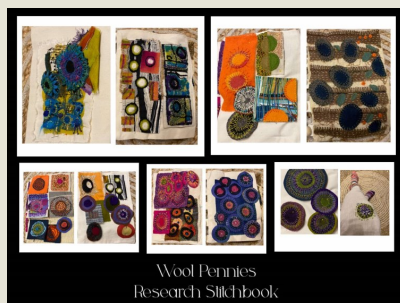
PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

I hope that the contents of the workshop kit might inspire you, and no doubt while you have been stitching your 'pennies' for the Group Project you will have been having some thoughts about your own project, (which you may or may not have jotted down.)

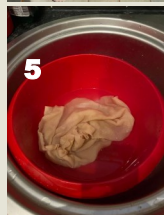
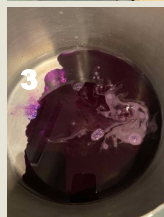
How you proceed is now completely up to you. If you have watched the accompanying video you will probably have identified a couple of techniques or ideas which you might like to investigate further?. *If you are completely at a loss as to where to start, maybe begin by turning the offcuts from the pennies you have already made for the Group Project into a piece of faux chenille and see where that leads you?.*

For me, the colour of the dyed wool made me think of a particularly special flower and my father. The faux chenille made a wonderful background. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS and RELAX. It's not a test, and you can't get it wrong! The best thing to do is to just start!!!

- Watch previous workshop videos
- Make notes
- Look at Pinterest
- Think about:
 - Colour theory
 - Boiling & dyeing wool
 - Basic embroidery stitches
 - Mandalas
 - Needle-felting
 - Faux chenille
 - Water soluble stabiliser
 - Visible darning
- Make use of the RSN stitch bank
- Watch the accompanying workshop video again ...



BOILING AND DYEING WOOLLEN FABRIC



Purple	Violet	Magenta	Maroon	Plum	Scarlet
Vermilion	Orange	Autumn Gold	Golden Yellow	Lemon	Olive Green
Jade	Emerald	Leaf	Lime	Light Brown	Dark Brown
Navy	Ultra-Marine	Turquoise	Cyan	Silver Grey	Black

If you haven't tried boiling and dyeing woollen fabric before, I would highly recommend having a go! You need a minimum of equipment, and it's really simple if you use a ready made 'All-in-One' dye and fixative. Take a look at a website called: www.heidifeathers.com (you won't be sorry!) There is even a discount code for 12% off purchases until 31st January (WARMWINTER12)

You are looking for Easifix All in One ACID dye. For the samples in your workshop kit I used Purple, Magenta & Lime, but obviously the choice is yours and don't forget that the colours will also mix together, and you can use them in different concentrations for lighter or darker shades.

The instructions which come with the dye are very straightforward (once you work out gallons and pints lol) ... but as a general guide:

To dye 100g of fabric (dryweight) to a full colour concentration, you need 10g of dye powder (2 tsps) and 5 pints of water.

1. Add 5 pints of water to a large pan.
2. Mix 10g dye powder with a small amount of WARM water
3. Add the dissolved dye to the water.
4. Stir and begin to heat
5. Pre-soak the fabric in warm water
6. Add the wet fabric to the water.
7. Bring to the boil.
8. Cover and simmer for 20 mins
9. Remove fabric from dye: *the fabric will have soaked up the dye and the water should be virtually clear*
10. Rinse and dry.

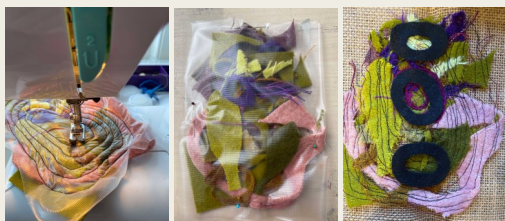
VIDEOS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO REWATCH



FAUX CHENILLE

www.vimeo.com/544259954

WATER-SOLUBLE STABILISER



www.vimeo.com/945277089

VISBLE DARNING/ BORO NORAG/RAGS



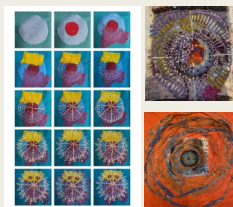
www.vimeo.com/517804567



THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

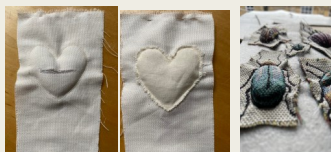
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MANDALAS



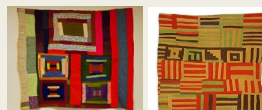
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TRAPUNTO



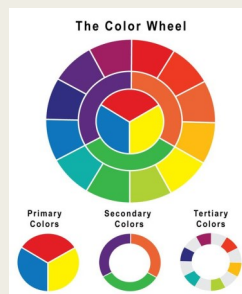
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CRAZY PATCHWORK



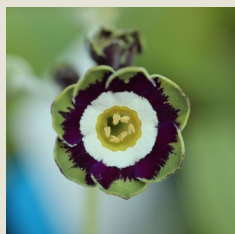
www.vimeo.com/533975514

COLOUR THEORY AND PROCIEN DYES



www.vimeo.com/370690098

SHOW AND TELL



My father developed a new variety of auricula and named it for me: *Auricula Helen Barter*. It was shown on BBC Gardener's World and described as 'perfection in a pot'. For his 90th birthday, I made him a cushion with a representation of our auricula on it.

My gorgeous friend, Janilaine, had also commissioned fellow textile artist, Corinne Young, to make a stitched version of my flower as her parting gift to me. After her death, I removed one of the flowers and placed it her in hand.



I think you can probably imagine how important this flower, these memories and the connections are to me: the green and purple, together with the orange of terracotta and the flaming auburn of Janilaine's beautiful hair...

I am NOT expecting you to replicate or imitate my work or thought processes. Please don't be put off or intimidated by my telling you about my work and it's significance to me. This is about sharing!



IMAGINE: We all have thoughts which float down a river in our mind - some are memories which you can acknowledge and let glide past. But some ... some you feel the need to wade in and catch hold of; to look a bit harder, to explore and properly identify. There are also thoughts which you deliberately try to drown.



When you think about sharing your work and your thoughts you just need to trust yourself and relax: please don't let yourself be worried about not knowing what the final destination will be.

I know it's clichéd, but 'enjoy the journey' and 'a journey of a thousand miles starts with one small step' etc ... imagine that the words you write to accompany your stitching are like postcards you send back from your travels, just letting the rest of the group know that you are safe, what you are up to, and what it is that 'makes you tick'.

And remember, this is a new way of working for all of us. Whatever you do, it is enough!

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