

FEATURED ARTIST: BRYONY UPTON



I completed a Foundation Year at Bournemouth College of Art followed by a City and Guilds in pattern cutting and dress design in Plymouth. Not really sure of what I wanted to do and chronically lacking in the confidence to apply for jobs I freelanced for many years as a dressmaker.

After I had my children I found that I loved working with families and children on creative activities and developed this into a full time career as a Community Artist, gaining teaching qualifications and a degree along the way. I specialised in 3D work, textiles and papier mache. I adored this work, especially working with so-called disaffected communities and those with drug and alcohol problems. I finally plucked up the courage to apply for a

Below: **Children's Self Portraits, machine stitched**

'proper job' and found myself as an educational manager in adult learning for the last few years before retirement. Throughout all this stitching in its various forms has been a constant. I just love sewing! I am currently working on a series of samplers exploring the relationships between stitches.

ASK THE ARTIST

What is the best work related thing you have done recently?

I know it sounds cheesy but it has been joining Drawn to the Valley. The response of other artists to my work has given me a real sense of validation.

Who do you most admire?

I generally admire people who are not afraid to go against the mainstream. Those who dare to speak out, be different, challenge perceived wisdom or champion the underdog. It's why I like Ru Paul's Drag Race so much. If I had to name someone I would say Vivienne Westwood.





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What irritates you?

Rather too many things to list! I am a bit of an old curmudgeon, I am sorry to say.

Where’s your favourite place?

Pew Tor, Dartmoor. I could see it from my bedroom window as a child and I used to take my own sons there to play and climb when they were children.

Who would be your fantasy dinner party guests?

At the moment I am obsessed with Ru Paul’s Drag Race on Netflix. I would like to invite Ru Paul along with some of my favourite queens to the most sumptuous dinner.

What motivates and inspires you?

I find the need to make is an intrinsic part of who I am but a deadline works wonders in the motivational department. I am inspired by shape, colour and texture, not to mention my artist friends.

What’s your favourite book?

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens. I first read it when I was fifteen and have reread it countless times since. Reading Great Expectation was the first time I realised the beauty and power of the written word. It is funny as well.

Left: **Reverse applique and chain stitched pieces**

Below: **Fabric flowers**

