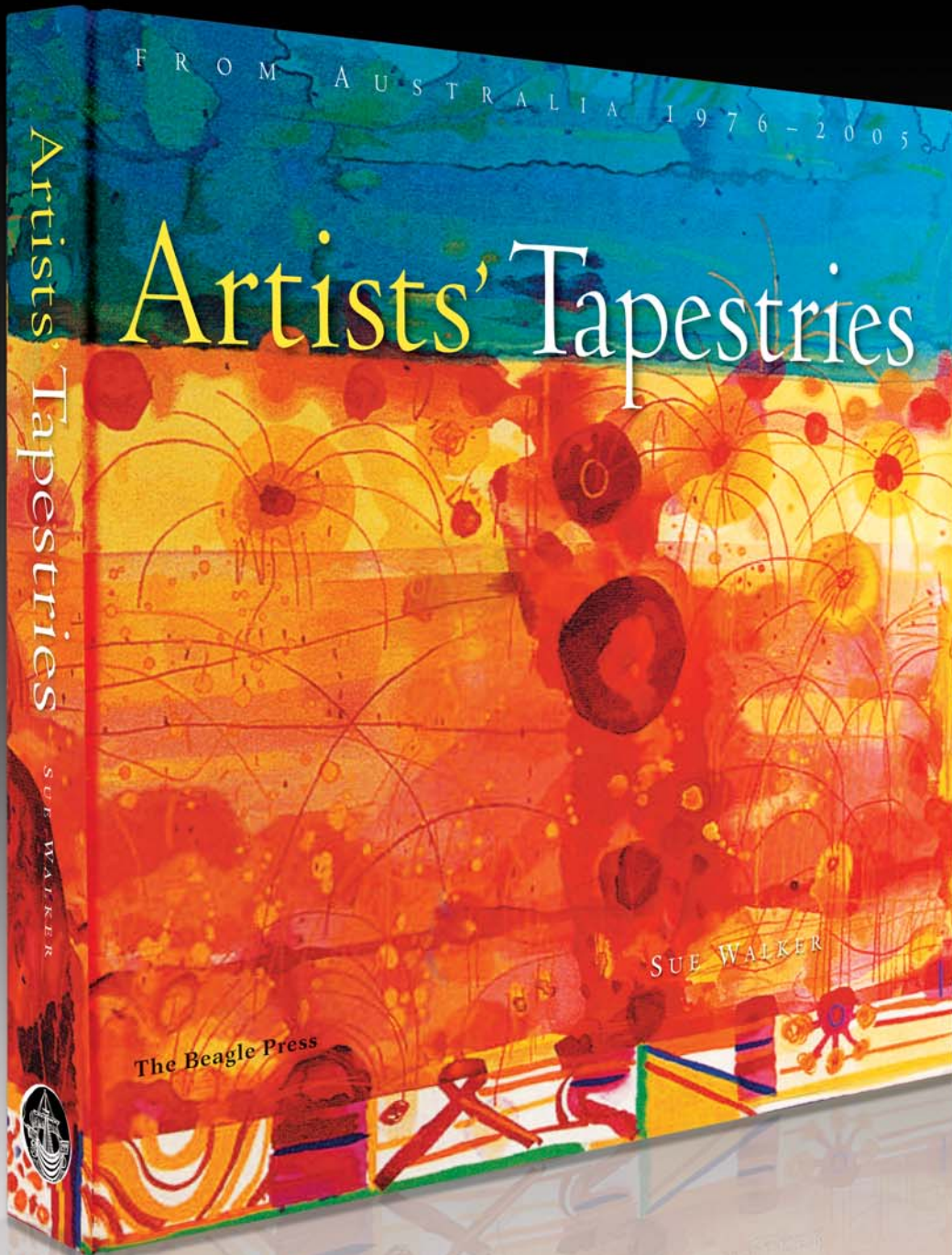


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VICTORIAN TAPESTRY WORKSHOP NEWSLETTER
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Victorian Tapestry Workshop

The definitive book on the
Victorian Tapestry Workshop will be
available at the Workshop from October.

Don't forget to buy a copy for Christmas!

Our cover

Artists' Tapestries From Australia 1976 – 2005 by Sue Walker

This is the story of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop from formation to the present, a story that runs alongside that of the visual arts in Australia over the last quarter of the 20th Century. This lavishly illustrated hard-cover book describes the remarkable and rapid success of an enterprise that grew from the imagination of artists and enlightened community leaders to become the largest creator of public art in Australia and a focus for contemporary tapestry throughout the world. Written by founding Director Sue Walker who led the production of over 350 tapestries during the 28 years she was with the Workshop, this is a book to be treasured.

Director's Diary

The Victorian Tapestry Workshop's exhibition *From here to Eternity* has had a wonderful six weeks at the S.H. Ervin Gallery in Sydney. It was opened by textile designer Jenny Kee and was greeted with acclaim by Sydney audiences. The exhibition will be launched at the Benalla Gallery in North East Victoria on 20 October, and will continue there until 25 November. While in Benalla the exhibition will be part of *Get into Art*, a state-wide program for communities to enjoy the extraordinary network of public galleries in Victoria. If you or your friends would like to join the celebrations we shall look forward to seeing you at the Benalla Gallery on 28 October for a guided tour of our wonderful exhibition of contemporary tapestries.

In addition to the galleries in Hamilton, Castlemaine, Adelaide and Maitland, the tour of *From here to Eternity* has now been extended to include Monash University's Centre in Prato, Italy in April-May 2008.



Susie Shears

In 2009 the exhibition will be seen at the Queensland University of Technology Art Museum in Brisbane before it travels to the Australian Embassy in Washington.

I hope that you all enjoy learning about the marvellous new tapestries on the Workshop's looms.

Susie Shears
Director

NEW COMMISSIONS

Xavier College

Jon Cattapan – *The visitor*

Xavier College recently selected Melbourne-based artist Jon Cattapan to design a tapestry for the foyer of its new Performing Arts Centre. Head of Xavier's Arts Faculty Danielle O'Leary explains: "From its inception, what excited us about this project were the collaborative possibilities."

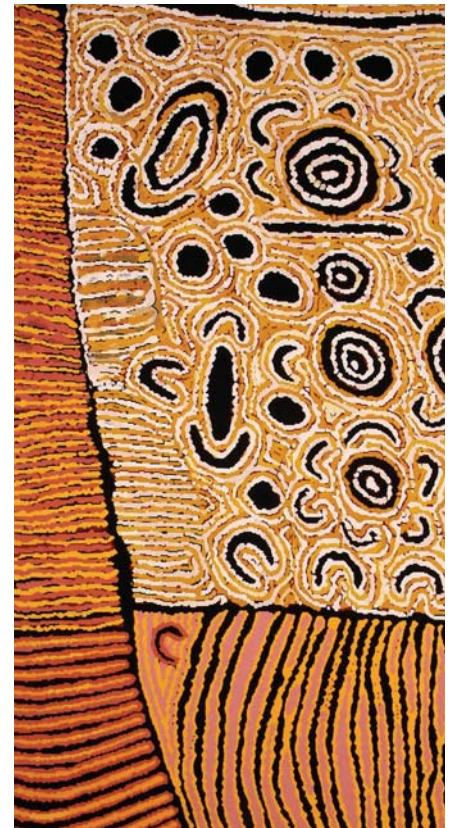
With the enthusiastic cooperation of the artist and the VTW, Xavier students are producing a documentary that tracks the project from the preliminary discussion stage to the opening of the new Centre. This involves the students' interviewing the artist, visiting him in his studio and installing cameras to capture the entire weaving process from sampling to cutting-off. The broader school community will also be invited to attend a series of lectures by Cattapan at the College when the tapestry is hung.

Jon Cattapan has spent the last 30 years depicting the urban environment and exploring ways of conveying a sense of identity and place. His "jewel-like works" that, according to one commentator, "throb with life", have been widely exhibited in museum and commercial shows throughout Australia and overseas.

Cattapan says of the work, "*The visitor* shows a group of youths in a vast panoramic cityscape, a dissolving, fluid vista that speaks of an age of digital global information. For the visitor, the potential journey is one of hope and belonging whilst for the group, what is represented is not only a newcomer but symbolically the challenge of new ideas."

Says O'Leary: "*The visitor* is a beautifully detailed and complex art work that will challenge generations of Xavier students to come."

The tapestry will measure 1.5 x 7.7m and is due to be finished in late 2007.



Completed tapestry destined for the Australian High Commission in New Delhi

New Delhi Tapestry

Recently completed tapestry based on a design by Nanyuma Napangati for the Australian High Commission in New Delhi. The tapestry is the third work in the Tapestry Foundation of Victoria's Embassy Collection. It was woven by Cheryl Thornton, Mala Anthony, Louise King and Milena Paplinska.



Artist Jon Cattapan in discussion with students from Xavier College



Weavers collaborating with New Zealand artist, Yvonne Todd

Queensland Art Gallery Yvonne Todd – *Alice Bayke*

In her exploration of artifice, New Zealand photographer Yvonne Todd reduces her subjects to passive canvases, heavily made-up, yet primly dressed; glossy, packaged for consumption yet patently repressed.

The work to be translated into tapestry for the Queensland Art Gallery, *Alice Bayke*, is part of a series called *Sea of Tranquility* which was inspired by "the unnatural qualities of commercial studio portrait photography." *Alice Bayke* references the startling, doll-like maquillage of Priscilla Presley for her marriage to Elvis.

Maud Page, Curator of the Gallery's collection of contemporary Pacific art, says of the artist: "Her work expounds a distinctively strong, if somewhat unnerving, view of New Zealanders and their relation to global popular culture. Todd is one of the most sought after younger artists of New Zealand today."

Todd has exhibited at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, the 2006 Busan Biennale in South Korea, the Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, the Auckland Art Gallery and Heide Museum of Modern Art. In 2002 she won the inaugural Walters Prize.

The finished tapestry will measure 3 x 2.3m and is being woven by Sue Batten and Amy Cornall. It is due to be finished in March 2008.



Family homestead woven by Milly Formby

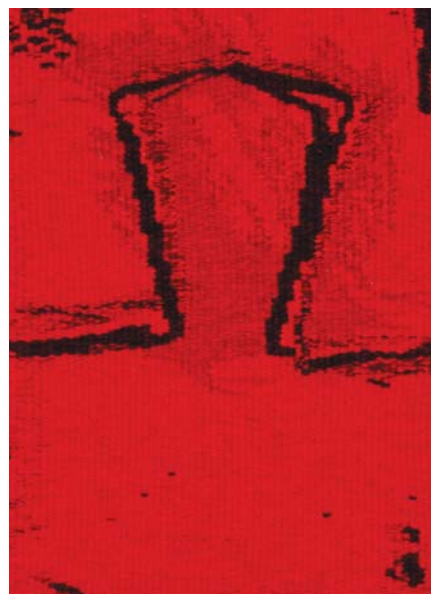
Annual Hancock Fellowship Lecture 2007: Red Presented in conjunction with the National Gallery of Victoria

The Red lecture explores the complex uses and meanings of the colour red in textiles across time and place. Red textiles are a potent symbol, representing power, status and emotion.

Red is the lowest frequency of light visible to the human eye. It exists in a vast array of shades and is easily seen, attracting attention and accelerating the pulse rate. Until the invention of synthetic dyes in the mid-19th century, high quality red dye was scarce and the colour became a prestigious commodity restricted to the elite. In the Heian (794 - 1185) and Edo (1600 - 1868) periods in Japan, wearing red was forbidden for ordinary citizens. Chic city dwellers flouted the taboo by wearing red undergarments.

Red has been used for centuries to underscore personal status, celebrate love and beauty, protect against evil and promote good fortune. Our speaker Rebecca A T Stevens (Consulting Curator, Contemporary Textiles, The Textile Museum, Washington) takes us on the journey that culminated in the exhibition RED for The Textile Museum, held earlier this year. The earliest piece in this exhibition was over 2,500 years old whilst the most recent was just five years old.

The exhibition included a wedding suit designed for a second marriage which proclaimed the wearer as passionate, powerful and ready to celebrate a second rite of passage. Red embroidery around the neck, sleeves and hem of an early twentieth century tunic was used to ward off the evil eye. An AIDS Awareness ribbon emphasized the role of blood as both the body's conduit for disease and the common thread that binds all humanity together.



Graham Fransella *Red head* woven by Milly Formby

Red is arguably the world's most significant colour, seeping deep into the psyche of humankind from antiquity to the present day.

Speaker
 Rebecca A T Stevens,
 Consulting Curator,
 Contemporary Textiles,
 The Textile Museum, Washington

Date
 Wednesday October 31
 at 6pm for 6.30pm

Venue
 Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, NGV
 International (enter north entrance,
 via The Arts Centre forecourt)

Bookings
 Bookings through the NGV
 03 8662 1555 - 9am to 5pm daily

Tapestries as heirlooms

There is a long tradition of people enriching their art collections through the purchase of a privately commissioned tapestry. These works often depict a family home, holiday residence or favourite landscape scene and become treasured heirlooms that are passed

down from one generation to the next. The depth and complexity of colour and form of tapestry, combined with its innate textural and tactile qualities can make it a highly resonant art form and perfectly suited to those wanting to capture a special time and place. These images depict some of the heirlooms woven at the Workshop.



Family boatshed woven by Merrill Dumbrell



View from client property woven by Milly Formby,
 Caroline Tully, Cheryl Thornton

Cheryl has continued to pursue her own studio practice. Her exquisite miniature tapestries, which she exhibits regularly in both solo and group exhibitions, reflect a particular sensitivity to subtle colour and fine detail. Her work is represented in many public and private collections including BHP, the Church of St James the Less Mount Eliza and Queensland Art Gallery.



Cheryl Thornton

Senior Weaver, Cheryl Thornton joined the Workshop in 1977 having completed teaching studies in Melbourne and further art studies at the Gordon Institute in Geelong. Since then Cheryl has been in charge of many major projects, including three Roger Kemps for the National Gallery of Victoria and most recently the Nanyuma Napangati for the Australian High Commission in New Delhi.

Cheryl is highly regarded within the Workshop where she plays a major role in mentoring younger staff members and her role as an educator has made a major contribution to the development of tapestry in Australia. "Teaching reminds me of the excitement I felt when I first started weaving – that sense of unexplored territory and possibility!" Cheryl teaches students privately and currently teaches the tapestry weaving classes for CAE at the Workshop.

The Victorian Tapestry Workshop was established in 1976 by the Government of Victoria to enable Australian artists to work with the rich and sumptuous medium that has entranced great artists and patrons down the centuries. The Workshop has a reputation as the foremost contemporary tapestry studio in the world today. It attracts international and Australian artists and collectors, resulting in an output of exceptional contemporary tapestries now numbering in the hundreds.

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 Cheryl Thornton
 Caroline Tully

Textile Conservator Consultant
 Elizabeth Pilven

VTW Dyer
 Cliff Renshaw

Photographs
 Viki Petherbridge
 Gwyneth Donlon

**ARTS
 VICTORIA**

Victoria
 The Place To Be

Hello everyone,

It seems a blink of the eye since last I wrote to you, we have all been so busy and the year has flown by!

We had a terrific turn out for the mid-winter lecture on the history of tapestry. Thank you to those who braved the weather.

In September the Friends enjoyed a springtime tram tour looking at nine tapestries in public places, mostly at the northern end of the CBD.

Remember, as Friends of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, you are welcome to visit the Workshop at any time and view the tapestries on the loom – just present your membership card to receive free entry.

As the year is fast closing, mark in your diary the Friends Christmas Party on Monday 3 December. I look forward to seeing you then.

Very best wishes

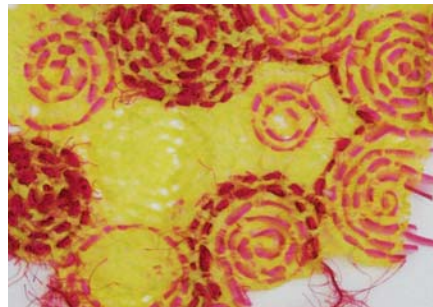
Robyn

Tapestry weaving classes with the CAE

Explore colour and texture and the fine techniques of tapestry weaving through CAE classes held at the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. For enquiries contact CAE Arts Centre on 03 9652 0611 or www.cae.edu.au

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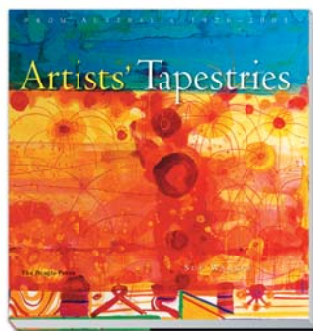
Subscribe on line to our eNews and receive VTW news updates - www.victapestry.com.au



Stephanie McKeon, 3rd year BVA
 Paper, ribbon, fibre

Monash University weaving

Students from Monash University who are currently studying tapestry at the Workshop held an exhibition in August of work in progress. The works were the result of a paper project exploring the parameters of weaving and the imaginative possibilities of everyday materials. "Installing the exhibition at the Workshop was an important part of the project", said Lecturer Kate Derum.



The story of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop

Purchase the Workshop's new book on its history from us, or download the order form www.victapestry.com.au On Thursday 22 November Sue Walker will be signing copies of the book at the Workshop between 12 noon and 2pm.