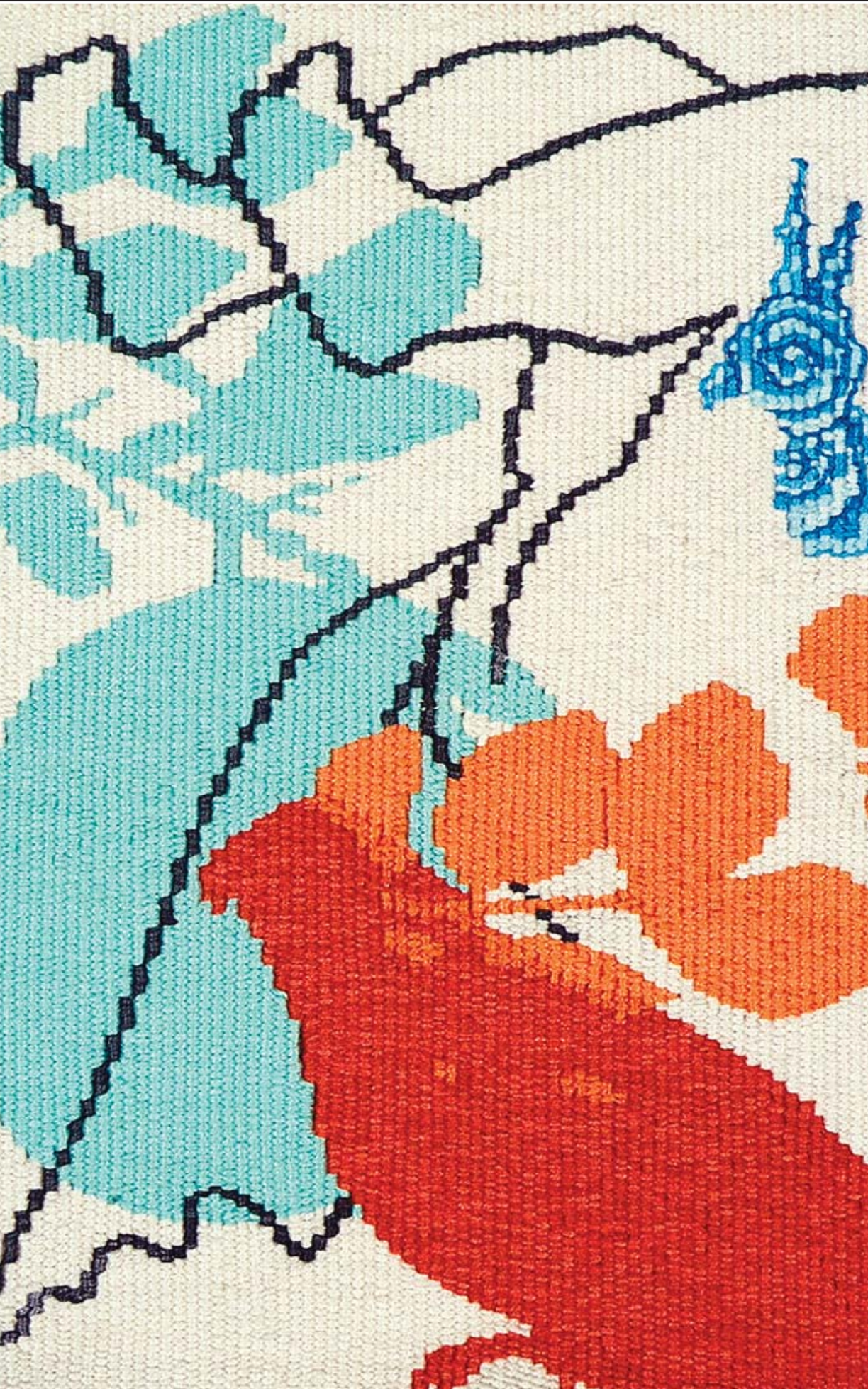
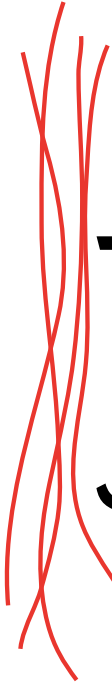


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VICTORIAN TAPESTRY WORKSHOP NEWSLETTER
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Victorian
Tapestry Workshop



Staff News

It was with regret that we farewelled Susie Shears, our Director of the last four years. Susie has gone to Italy to spend 5 months living in the small village of Greve, Tuscany, with her family. Susie's contribution to the Workshop's recent successes is immeasurable and we wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Diane Macleod, who has a long association with the workshop, has stepped in as Acting Director, and will be with us until the end of 2008.

Di began her relationship with the VTW in 1997 as Special Projects Consultant, bringing many ambitious projects to fruition, such as the Singapore Artist Exchange and overseeing the Federation Tapestry suite in 2001.

Di has had an illustrious career within the arts. She has worked at Arts Victoria, held the position of Director at both the Shepparton and Geelong Art Galleries, as well as acting as an art consultant for Crown Hotel. She has also worked as a freelance curator and writer.

Kate Derum 1943 – 2008



It is with great sadness that the Victorian Tapestry Workshop reports the passing of Kate Derum, Studio Manager at the Workshop from 2005 to 2006. Kate's legacy to the Workshop is the nurturing of outstanding artistic endeavour.

Kate has had a long association with the Workshop that took many forms spanning twenty years. In 1988 she coordinated the International Tapestry Symposium that was held in Melbourne with 220 delegates from 23 countries. She also developed and ran the tapestry weaving course offered through the Fine Arts department at Monash University. Kate mentored many artists who went on to feel passionately about their art practice in tapestry weaving. In 1995, Kate joined the Victorian Tapestry Workshop Board and served as a valuable member of the Board for the next nine years. In 2005 Kate stepped into the role of Studio Manager where she was responsible for the studio, weavers and tapestry production. Kate was highly regarded by all the staff at the Workshop. Her consideration for others and her ability to inspire her colleagues will always be with us.

Small tapestries: A unique and personal gift for Christmas

Just prior to Christmas, for the past couple of years the Workshop has exhibited the new small tapestries woven that year. This has proved to be a wonderful treasure trove for that elusive Christmas gift that you might have been looking for. The tradition will continue this year with a new selection on view in the Workshop gallery from late November. Small tapestries woven throughout the year include works by Nusra Latif Qureshi and Stephen Wickham. Works by Lara Merrett, Sue Lovegrove and Andrew Cooks, are now on the looms. Small tapestries by Melbourne artist Belinda Fox will also soon to be under way.

Making small tapestries is an exciting way for the Workshop to develop relationships with a great variety of significant artists that we may not have the opportunity to work with on larger commissions. It also provides collectors of textile art the opportunity to purchase more affordable tapestries.



Calm Horizons-III-b by Nusra Latif Qureshi
Woven by Pamela Joyce



Red comb # 1 (from 8 Women) By Deborah Klein
Woven by Rebecca Moulton

Workshop News

Congratulations to the Workshop and the Tapestry Foundation of Victoria for their recent win at the AbaF Awards, Victoria.



L-R: Anne Robertson – Tapestry Foundation of Victoria,
Sue Westwood – Victorian Tapestry Workshop,
Jane Haley – CEO, AbaF. Photo: Mili Wijeratne

The Workshop and Foundation were awarded the AbaF Victoria Giving Award which recognises successful fundraising programs. The nomination acknowledged the Foundation's assistance and support for the Embassy Tapestry collection, a program which places tapestries based on designs by indigenous artists, in Australian Embassies and High Commissions throughout the world. To date tapestries have been placed in Japan, China, India and Washington DC, with further tapestries planned for France and Ireland.

VTW Business Manager Sue Westwood and Tapestry Foundation Executive member, Anne Robertson accepted the award.

Sometimes small tapestries are produced at the end of an artist residency. While not all of our artist-in-residence placements culminate in small tapestries, many of the works in our collection emerge as an extension of this appreciative conversation. Some of the small tapestries arise from VTW Studio Manager, Sara Lindsay's investigations of diverse emerging and established artists in Melbourne's dynamic arts scene.

No two weavers mix colour in exactly the same way, and therefore the solitary pursuit of the small tapestries permits the individual weaver complete artistic control of these projects.

The Workshop gallery is open 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. Apart from the new work completed this year, a selection of works from past years will also be on display.



"Useful foliage" *Tales-II-b* by Nusra Latif Qureshi (detail)
Woven by Chris Cochius



Birds of the Clarence II (detail) by Robert Ingpen
 Woven by Caroline Tully and Jennifer Sharpe

Off the looms

A number of projects have been completed in the last few months. The charming *Birds of the Clarence II*, a private commission, on the loom from March through to mid-August this year, was based on an original painting by well-known Australian ex-pat artist Robin Hill. Robert Ingpen, known to tapestry fans as the designer of the Melbourne Cricket Club Tapestry, interpreted this painting, re-composing the work to generate a sense of open space within the design making it suitable for tapestry weaving.

This tapestry is a companion piece to *Birds of the Clarence I*, woven in 2005, featuring the water birds of the Clarence River in NSW. The suite has been designed for a specific interior domestic location with a tapestry panel situated on either side of a door way.

This very fine tapestry shines with character and detail. The weavers spent much time researching the native birds and animals in the design to recreate accurate studies of the flora and fauna. The team referred to fresh gum leaves to capture the reality of the different phases of a gum leaf cycle and its pretty flowers.

Artist in residence Sue Lovegrove

I came to my residency at VTW with a great deal of anticipation, excitement and a small amount of trepidation - I had my heart set on learning to make a small tapestry during my stay. As it turned out weaving is just as hard as it looks!

As a painter I've been fascinated with the way brushmarks can act like stitches or lines, weaving or binding the surface of a painting together. My initial explorations led me to play with some images of native grasses which I interpreted into long calligraphic white lines, like ribbons wrapping the surface, in a series of small paintings on paper. The lines were to me like an imaginary warp that had floated to the surface and been let loose to wander freely. As it became obvious that my small paintings were

Wangaratta

The monumental Wangaratta Cathedral tapestry, *Into the Light* (7.4 x 3.7m), was cut from the loom in early August, with weaver and designing artist, Leonie Bessant, having the honour of doing the last stitches.

This tapestry was commissioned by the Wangaratta Diocese to hang behind the altar at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Wangaratta. This tapestry is the largest ecclesiastical work of its kind in Australia. In addition to the usual preliminary samples, a small colour study was created to keep track of the changes being made to the tapestry palette in response to Leonie's continued exploration of the physical space of the Cathedral.

The tapestry was blessed during a special service at the Cathedral in Wangaratta in mid September, by The Right Reverend David Farrer, with the Archbishop of Melbourne, The Most Reverend Phillip Freier, in attendance.



Into the Light by Leonie Bessant
 Woven by Leonie Bessant, Louise King,
 Mala Anthony and Pamela Joyce

far too complicated for a beginner weaver to even think about attempting, I refined the images into smaller and smaller details in the hope of making them more suitable to weave. Well so I thought. It was a mind bending exercise, my bobbin always seemed to be on the wrong pass and I mixed so many beautiful collections of different coloured wool - but which to use?

Despite the challenges, I loved every minute of it and couldn't believe the excitement of cutting off my little piece from the loom and realising it was 'alive'. That bundle of different coloured threads had been transformed into a tangible object. The residency at the VTW allowed me to develop a series of images in ways that I couldn't possibly have imagined. I am very thankful to the remarkable weavers at the VTW who generosity gave me their of time and enthusiasm to help me along the way.

The Tapestry of Light

The Tapestry of Light is an experimental tapestry project woven from fine luminescent wires, optical fibres and reflective silk thread. It interprets the French 14th Century tapestry *The Apocalypse Tapestries of Angers*.

The exploration into the possibilities that illuminated fibres offer, extends the parameters of the Victorian Tapestry Workshops' experience, and contributes to light art, the printed image and tapestry internationally. The utilisation of new forms of silk screens and materials for drawing in light are two components being realised already in this project. With a new seeding development grant from the RMIT University Design Research Institute, the project now has a globally recognised research base.

The first marquette, which has been constructed at the VTW, will be exhibited in London in November 2008 at the Lethaby Gallery in the University of Arts London.

The Angers Tapestry (540cm high x 10,800cm long) is based on the final book of the New Testament, *Revelation*. Its iconographic transference from illuminated manuscript to tapestry points to the transition of medieval woven cloth becoming a hybrid, illuminated fabric.

The predictive futuristic subject matter in the original text seems to be as pertinent today as it was in the 14th Century. The global community wrestles with issues such as sustainability, environmental instability, shifting borders, urban pollution and expansion, as well as the immeasurable unknowns of the human condition in *fin de siecle* scenarios, while simultaneously creating new worlds through scientific and electronic technologies. This project captures some of these complexities.

High chroma, dense pigments and fluorescent colours are integral to my work. The use of illumination in the tapestry process is an exciting outcome in my explorations into colour and light, and into the sourcing of unusual materials in far-off places. As with many large projects it is a journey in every respect - when the Parisian workshops of Nicolas Bataille wove the original Angers Tapestries, they would never have even fantasised that their work would one day be reconstructed into light!

Dr Irene Barberis © 2008



Tuppy the Tapestry Collector

Tuppy Cole has been a friend of the VTW since 1996, first becoming involved after a chance conversation with friends. She is an active member of the Friends of the Tapestry Workshop committee, and contributes her time to the smooth running of the Friends subscription programme.

Tuppy has always had an appreciation for art and textiles. She has an eclectic collection of paintings, small sculptural works and textiles, collected over many years, often disparate in style but displayed harmoniously together. She has a good eye. Tuppy, who spent her first 6 years on a plantation in Papua New Guinea has a resonant love of indigenous work. She has many small sculptural works and paintings from indigenous artists from Australia and around the world.

Tuppy is always interested and engaged with the many projects and goings on at the Workshop. In her roles as a Friends Committee Member and Busy Bee (a group of volunteers that come to the Workshop fortnightly to help with tasks such as unwinding bobbins) she is frequently at the Workshop and able to regularly see works on the looms as they develop.

Tuppy began her collection of small VTW tapestries a few years ago and now has what she refers to as her 'tapestry wall'. It is a deep appreciation for the handmade that helps fuel her passion for tapestry. She loves the ever so slight irregularity of these individual works. As an art lover, she appreciates the unique hybrid art of VTW tapestry: a combination of the warmth and texture of textiles with the inspiration of original artworks. Tuppy's fabulous collection is a beautiful unique tapestry marker of weavers and artists associated with the Workshop over her continuing sojourn with us.

Christmas Break

The workshop will close for the Christmas period from Friday 19th December and will reopen on Thursday 15th January.

Artists Tapestries

A reminder that the Workshop still has a limited number of Sue Walker's seminal book on the history of the VTW, *Artists Tapestries 1976 – 2005*. You can order the book from us or download an order form from the website www.victapestry.com.au

Dear Friends,

How quickly this year has gone, one moment we are all talking of the projects ahead and now we are contemplating the Annual Friends Christmas Party!

So many people responded to the Tram Tour of tapestries in the Melbourne CBD that we decided to run two tours - each a week apart - to accommodate the numbers. We are hoping to develop a new tour next year of the Melbourne University tapestries, which will encompass tapestries woven at the Workshop as well as earlier tapestries woven in overseas studios. Watch this space next year...

There has been an extraordinary diversity of size, subject and overall beauty of tapestries woven at the VTW this year. I hope many of you were able to come and see them while they were on the looms. The tapestries always feel like they are on the loom 'for ever' and then suddenly they are finished, sometimes hung at the Workshop for a week or a month, then whisked away to their new homes.

The Christmas Party will be held on Monday 1st December and is always a fun finale for the year. Good music, good food and of course the Tree, which this year will be adorned with hand crafted angels.

Hope to see you then,

Best wishes

Robyn

Friends News
 Robyn Cass

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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VTW Dyer
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Photographs
 Viki Petherbridge
 Lily Fraser

Front cover image:
Useful Tales-I-b by Nusra Latif Qureshi (detail)
 Woven by Sue Batten

**ARTS
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