

Review of our Wednesday Morning Talk, 12th September

Deborah Collum

Mixed media textile artist Deborah Collum gave an inspiring talk to the AMA. Former Head of Art at Bluecoat School, Coventry and now retired, Deborah is able to devote her time now to developing her practice. She confesses that she didn't go to art college but rather has a degree in the History of Art, but as head of the art department she honed her repertoire and skills in a variety of medium. Deborah loved teaching but illhealth prompted her to retire early. She does still use her teaching skills running workshops.



Her artistic pursuits have centred around her love of textiles, the softness of the materials and portability of hand sewing. 'You can take a piece of work anywhere and keep stitching'. Often dismissed as woman's work sewing has for too long been relegated to areas of domesticity, making clothes, tea trays, embroidering pillow cases, making cot blankets, darning and mending; keeping warm by being sewn into your underwear!! These were all simple acts of love. There is a resurgence of and blossoming of interest in sewing and embroidery. Textile work is playful, youthful and coming into its own now. It begs the question is it an art or a craft or both?



Landscape detail

There are four main strands to Deborah's work. Collage of materials using the simplicity of stitch to hold together fabric swatches and scraps to form abstract pictures with a strong sense of colour and composition. She clearly enjoys working with a variety of materials harnessing techniques.

More recently Deborah has painted a series of textile landscapes. These delight the eye and draw the viewer in. They reflect her observations of the changing rural landscape from the viewpoint of her hillside garden. Deborah claims 'I am convinced that in its quiet way Warwickshire is one of the most beautiful areas of Britain'.

Deborah has also worked on a series of ephemera, integrating vintage materials, old lace, buttons to refashion into bigger pieces. All these repurposed materials bring their own story to the work. She often begins with a collage of fabrics, dyed, painted or printed, machinestitching them together before oversewing with layers of hand embroidery and other embellishments such as beads, buttons and foils.

Deborah delighted us with a series of painted baby grows, which she started when she rediscovered one of her own child's babygrows forgotten in a drawer. Bringing to life again by painting and printing on it is an example of her own act of love and tenderness in preserving the

Review of our Wednesday Morning Talk continued...



Un Ange Passe

Deborah showed us then her large figurative Shakespearian/Dickensian characters. Dramatic, bold and colourful, with wonderful glitzy bits sewn in, silk tops threads overlaid to create wonderful depth and texture.

Deborah's work has a breadth to it; from telling powerful stories of larger than life dramatic characters, or simple acts of love and tenderness to her landscapes capturing the beauty of the local countryside.

Deborah had a very successful Warwickshire Open Studios and will be exhibiting next year too as well as a one woman show in Ledbury in 2019. Deborah gives

talks and runs workshops, check her out on her website; deborahcollowayloveart.uk



Fiona Metcalfe

Changes at this years AGM

This years AGM on the morning of October 17th will say thank you to two outgoing, long serving, committee members.

Sheila Graham resigned during the summer due to family commitments and Julia Hayes, who was also the AMA chair for several years, resigned in September.

Both Sheila and Julia have given a lot of energy and commitment to the AMA over the last years and will be missed.

We do have three new committee members who are currently serving on a coopted basis and at the AGM I will be asking that they are made into full committee members.

They are: Dee Luntley, Dominica Vaughan and Chris Docherty.

Althorpe Studios loss of lease

Bad news and good news this month regarding the drawing workshops at Althorpe studios. Althorpe's landlord cancelled the lease suddenly forcing Suminder and Jonathan to hastily find an alternative venue. This was quickly achieved by booking the Temperance Bar cellar room. 18 of us turned up for the first session on Monday evening 24th September to enjoy an evening's drawing. The good news; the drawing space was cosy and warm and pretty atmospheric the bad news obviously the loss of Althorpe as a studio venue. The site is to be developed as a student block for 300 if the developers get permission!