



Canolfan Grefft Rhuthun  
Y Ganolfan i'r Celfyddydau Cymhwysol  
Ruthin Craft Centre  
The Centre for the Applied Arts



# decoration

resource pack



what is craft?

# what is craft?

Who does it?

Why do they do it?

Why does it matter?

Looking at the nature of craft and its relation to everyday living – based on four broad seasons over 2 years we aim to consider:

materials

decoration

process

function

and explore the question... *What is Craft?*

Ruthin Craft Centre is delighted to launch our new and exciting programme called *What is Craft?* As part of this project we will be undertaking a 2 year audience development, outreach and resource legacy programme which includes a new designated on-site resource space at Ruthin Craft Centre. We want to return to the basic questions about the nature of craft and its relation to everyday living. *What is Craft? Who does it? Why do they do it? Why does it matter?*

We hope you will be inspired by this programme and more importantly get involved!



what is craft?

# decoration

## resource pack

Traditionally decoration has been applied to objects, whether for artistic interest as part of its design and aesthetic appeal, or to signify its function. Decoration may also be added as a personal touch, for example initials, emblems or motifs to make an item individual or to show who it belongs to. It may be symbolic, iconographic, abstract or may even convey a narrative, such as the decoration on Greek vases or Classical architectural friezes.

Decoration may be added to the surface with paint, embroidery, attachments, embellishments etc, or incorporated into the actual process of making an object, such as glazing, dyeing, sculpting or forming.

This pack investigates the different forms of decoration used in arts and crafts by focussing on a range of selected works. The pack is designed to support teachers and gallery educators in the planning, delivering and following up visits to Ruthin Craft Centre with a collection of activities, ideas and resources related to the broad theme of decoration. The workshops and practical tasks are suitable for all ages and can be adapted to your group's specific needs.

This resource pack is also aimed at our general audience and visitor (both to the centre and our website) who may like to find out more about Craft and the forms of decoration used in its making – to 'get inspired: get involved'.

Julie Robson

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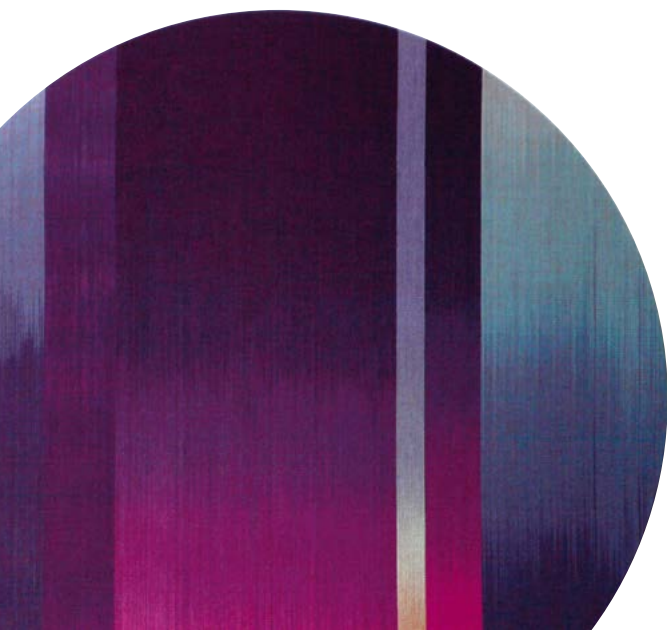
get inspired,  
get involved!

*'Colour is as strong as the impression it creates'.*

– Ivan Albright

*'Texture is the most enduring and ubiquitous underpinning of form... certainly a calming, meditative and appealing world for both the eye and the mind'.*

– Lynda Lehman



Ptolemy Mann, *Circle 2*, 2011

# Decoration

*'There is no society ever discovered in the remotest corner of the world that has not had something that we would consider the arts. Visual arts – decoration of surfaces and bodies – appears to be a human universal.'* – Stephen Pinker

**Dictionary definition:** *Decoration – an addition that renders something more attractive or ornate.*

Why do humans feel the need to decorate surfaces? From the beginnings of civilisation, even the most basic utilitarian objects have been given 'finishing touches' such as decorative marks, pattern, texture or colour. Everything, from pre-historic pots to today's personalised iPad covers. Does the urge to decorate stem from creativity and a desire for surrounding oneself with beautiful objects, or is it related to identity, ownership and making an individual mark?

Line, form, colour and texture are the basic elements of decorative design and these are combined by the artist to form an aesthetically pleasing composition. The maker will also consider rhythm, contrast, scale, proportion, balance and harmony when creating a design. Some common motifs used in decoration include: plant-life and the forms, lines and colours found in flowers, stems, branches etc; geometric shapes; spots and stripes; natural forms such as waves, shells, eggs, sun, moon etc; figurative subjects such as animals and people; mythological creatures eg dragons, mermaids, gargoyles etc.

Decoration may also be incorporated into the actual process of making an object, such as glazing, dyeing, weaving, crocheting, sculpting or forming etc. Colour itself may provide decoration in the way that it is applied, for example through mottling, stippling, dripping, smudging or dabbing the material onto a surface.

Why makers decorate is a subject for endless debate, but some of the reasons for adding decoration in craft are suggested below:

**Adornment:** decorating oneself with jewellery, textiles and accessories.

In 1995, David Poston curated an exhibition for the Crafts Council, 'What is Jewellery' and according to his survey people wear forms of personal adornment for:

- Status – to display wealth or importance
- Alignment – to project a certain image, to convey a message, to create a sense of belonging to a group or as a form of propaganda
- Self – for its physical or psychological effect, its tactile or sensual qualities, sentimental value, means of projecting one's character or saying something about oneself
- Spirit – as a ritual object, charm or amulet with symbols or icons
- Imposed identity – from within or outside a certain group
- Functional purposes – eg fastener, tie-pin, keyring, etc)

Historically, the body was the first surface available to humans for decorating, not only with costumes, beads and other forms of jewellery, but also by piercing, marking and dyeing the skin in the form of tattoos.



Andrew Logan, *An Artistic Adventure* launch exhibition in the Ruthin Craft Centre courtyard, 2008

**Dressing:** covering with fabrics, textiles, colour, textures and pattern. This applies to fashion and interior design – using decorative materials to create personal style and to improve the appearance and ambience of one's living environment. Dressing may also change the character of a person, object or place. For example: fancy dress disguises a party-goer; Christmas decorations transform houses, shops and streets for the festive season.

**Embellishment:** adding extraneous details and ornamentation to make an object more interesting or valuable. For example, a mediaeval manuscript could be embellished with gold leaf, illustrations and elaborate calligraphy.

**Identity:** initials, logos, emblems, shapes or colours may indicate personal ownership, membership, culture or identity. For example, a dragon motif suggests that an item may be Welsh; the wearer of an anchor tattoo was most likely a sailor; yellow football shirts are associated with the Brazil national team etc.

Many makers develop a signature style or brand through their personal choice of decoration. They may also have their own mark or logo. This makes their work recognisable, unique and often authenticates and increases its value for collectors.

**Illustration:** decoration sometimes takes the form of story-telling. For example, the frieze on a Classical building or figures on a Greek vase may relate myths and legends or tell the story of a battle. Grayson Perry uses the surface of his ceramics and tapestries to depict auto-biographical episodes and for socio-political commentary.

**Pattern** is created through the use of repeated shapes, lines and colours to add interest and variation to a surface. For example, the Ancient Greeks added bands of sculptural decoration with various patterns (eg Greek key, egg and dart, guilloche etc) to give definition to architectural features. This practice was copied by Victorian wallpaper designers who often printed edging in similar styles.

**Style** is closely related to decoration: the ways in which various details are combined dictates style. For example, strong outlines, geometric shapes and flat colours in textiles, ceramics or jewellery are associated with Art Deco; patterns based on organic forms, often merging ornament with object suggest Art Nouveau etc. Lack of decoration, colour, pattern etc can also indicate style – minimalism!

**Symbolism:** decorative features may be used to signify form and function or to tell you about the history of an object. For example, a star on a Christmas tree relates it to the story of the Nativity; a frieze of vine leaves on a building tells you that it is or was a wine bar or restaurant etc.

**Texture** describes the surface of material and can create an interesting visual effect. Texture also contributes to the physical, sensual and psychological experience of wearing and touching.

## Tasks

**Collect** logos of businesses and organisations and put together a quiz for your group. Can you recognise the company, club or shop from its emblem?

**Design** your own maker's mark or logo. Make a stencil or print for it.

**Research** festive decorations – festoons, swags, garlands, banners, streamers, cake and table decorations etc. In a group, design a party – choose an event and decide how you will deck out the venue, the table, the transport, the staff, the guests!

**Take photographs** of banners, advertisements, architectural and sculptural decorative details in your area. Look out for symbols and find out what they represent.

**Personalise** the cover of a file or folder with photographs, paints, text, stickers etc.

**Discuss** graffiti on public buildings. Is it art or vandalism? Find out about Banksy!

**Decorate** a cake! Choose a muffin or cupcake for starters. Make sketches and a template. Decide which materials to use... then create your masterpiece!

## Further Resources

Praz, Mario, *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration: From Pompeii to Art Nouveau*, Thames and Hudson, 2008

Battistini, Matilde, *Symbols and Allegories in Art*, Getty Publications, 2006

Hornung, David, *Colour: a Workshop for Artists and Designers*, Laurence King, 2012

Watt, Fiona and Blay, Amy, *Decorations to Cut, Fold and Stick*, Usborne Publishing Ltd, 2014

<http://styles-and-periods.interiordezine.com/>

<http://www.britannica.com/art/floral-decoration>

<http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/bodydecoration/>

<http://www.almanac.com/content/meaning-flowers>

## Work in Focus: Ptolemy Mann

### *Three Pieces to Dress a Wall 2010*



Ptolemy Mann, *Inspired by – The legacy of Anni Albers* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2010

Weaver Ptolemy Mann has a unique approach to her craft which has taken it into the 21st century. She creates sophisticated wall-based textiles using her signature hand dyed and woven technique for private and public commissions and also produces a wide range of commercially available work including rugs, lampshades, bed linen, cushions and throws. Underscoring her work is a deep interest in colour which she describes as ‘purely instinctive.’

Links have been made between her geometric abstract designs and modernist painting and it comes as no surprise to find that Mann originally intended to study Fine Art at St Martin’s School of Art, London but decided on Textile Design for her degree. She approached the subject as an artist/crafts-maker and surprised her tutors when she began to stretch her fabrics over a deep wooden frame just as painters stretch canvas: “My tutors didn’t like the idea at all.” She recalls, “telling me that mounting my fabric onto a frame denied its drape and fluidity.” However, this technique has allowed her to explore the architectural potential of textiles and to take her craft into new directions and as she has pointed out: “when you are weaving a piece of cloth, it is under tension and it always bothered me that when I cut it off the loom it lost that tension and I wanted to keep that tension and linear quality.”

Mounting and stretching her work has enabled her to retain that tension and precision whilst also emphasising the edges of the hangings. In effect, it gives the textiles a three dimensional or architectural quality which is further enhanced by scale.

For the *Inspired By – The Legacy of Anni Albers* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre in 2010, which brought together a number of contemporary makers, Mann's response was a series of three woven wall pieces influenced by weaver Albers' *Torah Ark Panels* for the Emanu-El Temple in Dallas, 1957. Anni Albers was married to the abstract artist Josef Albers, one of the teachers at the influential Bauhaus School in Germany. Besides painting, he was a great colour theorist and his wife translated some of his ideas into textiles. Anni Albers' *Ark* curtains were made from shimmering lurex, mounted on sliding wooden panels, designed to work with the surrounding architecture. This piece 'particularly resonated' for Mann and she particularly liked the way that the blocks of colour were 'staggered' when installed in the synagogue. The three panels of her homage to Albers are similarly staggered in the way they are displayed. The dip-dyed warps create her signature subtle colour gradients that capture the rich, luxurious tones of the *Torah Ark*. As the title suggests, the work is not merely 'hung' on the wall, but 'dresses' it, activating the architectural space with its presence.

"Clever and eye-catching textiles depend entirely on how colours work together"

Ptolemy Mann

## Tasks

**Research** colour theory: what are complimentary colours? What is a colour wheel? How do you create shades and contrasts? Who was Johannes Itten?

**Talk about** colour. How are you affected by different colours emotionally? What do you associate with individual colours? Which colours do you like to wear?

**Find out** more about Ptolemy Mann and her work: How has she applied colour theory to her textiles? How has she worked with architects as a colour consultant? Compare her wall-hangings to paintings by Josef Albers, Mark Rothko and other abstract artists.

**Watch** a video of a weaving demonstration on a cardboard loom: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbtKnvc\\_9No](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbtKnvc_9No)) or an 18th century loom: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnbUF0wglfw>) Find out how textiles are produced!

**Design** an apartment using colours and textiles inspired by Ptolemy Mann's work.

**Make** a wall-hanging by stretching fabric over a frame. Decorate with dye-paints, appliqué, embroidery.

## Further Resources

Hughes, Philip, *Ptolemy Mann*, Ruthin Craft Centre, 2012

Albers, Josef, *Interaction of Colour*, Yale University Press, 1963

Fox Weber, Nicholas, *The Bauhaus Group*, A.A.Knopf, 2009

<http://www.ptolemymann.com/design.html>

[http://www.ptolemymann.com/assets/albers\\_interaction\\_of\\_colour\\_review.pdf](http://www.ptolemymann.com/assets/albers_interaction_of_colour_review.pdf)

<http://www9.open.ac.uk/oaa/content/after-anni-albers-exploring-architecture-colour-and-geometry-through-weaving>

[http://monoskop.org/images/4/46/Itten\\_Johannes\\_The\\_Elements\\_of\\_Color.pdf](http://monoskop.org/images/4/46/Itten_Johannes_The_Elements_of_Color.pdf)

<http://www.worqx.com/color/itten.htm>



Simon Carroll, *Cups* (detail), earthenware, photo: Dewi Tannatt Lloyd

## Ceramics

Ceramics may be decorated in many ways, using a variety of techniques and materials either before or after glazing. Some of the methods are listed below:

**Glaze:** liquid solution of finely ground minerals used to cover pottery. The ware is dipped into glaze or it can be sprayed or painted on. During firing it fuses to the clay to create a non-porous surface.

**Imprints:** small objects or textured materials may be pushed into the clay leaving a raised pattern on the object.

**Roulette wheel:** a tool with a notched wheel which is pushed over the clay to produce a relief pattern.

**Salt Glaze:** a thin glaze produced by introducing common household salt into the kiln at high temperature. The chlorine is removed by the heat as a gas and the sodium combines with the silica in the clay to create a thin, glassy film on the surface of the pottery. The resulting texture is finely dotted or mottled similar to orange peel.

**Sgraffito** technique of applying layers of slip in contrasting colours and then scratching to produce an outlined drawing or design.

**Slip trailing:** a method of decorating with slip (a thin mixture of water and clay). A poured stream of slip is delivered to damp or leather-hard clay through a fine-pointed dispenser.

**Sponge decoration:** method using small sponges that are dipped in coloured glaze or slip and then dabbed onto the surface to create pattern and texture.

**Tiles and Mosaics:** glazed ceramic squares may also be used for decorating surfaces (tessellation) and creating patterns or pictures.

**Transfer print or decal:** commonly used for mass-produced china. The design is printed on paper in ceramic ink or underglaze colours and this is applied to the surface of biscuit-fired ware. The paper is soaked off to leave the decoration. The object is given a clear glaze and fired again to fix the design.

## Tasks

**Find out** about different surface decoration techniques in ceramics How does decoration and shape relate to an object's use? Look for examples of different ceramics in your home.

**Look** at the work of Susan O'Byrne. How does she incorporate pattern into her designs?

**Play** with clay! Press objects into a rolled out slab to create textures, imprints and patterns (eg shells, textiles, coins, wallpaper etc). You could cut round the most interesting bits to make decorative coasters.

### Further Resources

Connell, Jo, *The Potter's Guide to Ceramic Surfaces*, Apple Press 2002

Turner, Anderson, *Surface Decoration Techniques*, Amer Ceramic Society, 2014

Mattison, Steven, *The Complete Potter: The Complete Reference to Tools, Materials and Techniques for all Potters and Ceramicists*, Apple Press, 2003

Cooper, Emmanuel, *Ten Thousand Years of Pottery*, The British Museum Press, 2002

Cooper, Emmanuel, *Contemporary Ceramics*, Thames & Hudson, 2009

[www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/ceramics/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/ceramics/)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQmqRsz2y14>

<http://www.creativesketchbook.co.uk/2013/07/susan-obyrnes-patterned-ceramic.html>

*Emmanuel Cooper OBE 1938–2012, A Retrospective Exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2013–2014*



## Work in Focus: Lowri Davies

### *Earthenware Jug 2002–3*

Born in Pontypridd, 1978, Lowri has lived and worked in Aberystwyth for most of her life. Her Welsh heritage provides the inspiration and is a major source for her designs. Following her post-graduate studies in ceramics at Staffordshire, she had a work placement in surface design at Wedgewood.

Using both building and slip-cast techniques, her work is produced, decorated and finished by hand. This gives her tea-sets, vessels and vases a homely character that is appropriate for the subjects depicted on their surfaces. The pottery provides a plain background for etched line drawings, screen-printed images and digitally printed decals. Illustrations of flora and fauna, domestic objects are combined with local landscape and Welsh stock imagery, further finished with gold and silver lustres. Her work makes reference to the displays of pottery and bric-a-brac that are found displayed on traditional Welsh dressers, though the shapes of her ceramics and lively decoration are very contemporary in character.

Earthenware Jug is a good example of Davies's decoration technique. The white vessel acts as a blank page in a drawing book onto which the hand-drawn illustration has been applied by transfer. The drawing shows the interior of her grandmother's buttery/kitchen which often has appeared in her work over the years:

*'I drew the image during a period between the time that my Nain died and a time before the house was renovated by my cousin and her family. The house is situated on a farm at the upper end of the Dyfi Valley, close to the village of Llanymawddwy in Merionydd. I spent a great deal of time at the house and on the farm whilst growing up and it's a place of great importance to me.'*

The brown and red tones add to the rustic character of the kitchen and the free-hand sketchy, lines, blurred in parts, contribute to an unpretentious, hand-made character. The irregularity of the shapes also helps the rectangular cupboards and household appliances sit comfortably on the curved surface of the jug.



above: Lowri Davies, Porcelain Jug 2002–3,  
Aberystwyth University Ceramic Collection  
right: Lowri Davies, Earthenware Jugs, 2003



## Tasks

**Draw** a room in your home in the style of Lowri Davies, complete with shelves, cupboards, belongings etc.

**Write** a poem or description of a room you remember from childhood and illustrate it with sketches or photographs.

**Discuss** how kitchens have changed since your grandparents' days. Interview an older relative about their memories of cooking, cleaning and other household chores. How has modern technology, fashion, lifestyle etc affected kitchen design?

**Compose** a still life with kitchen utensils, pots, pans and crockery. Make a detailed study in pencil and then make a line drawing in pen. Try to make a third drawing of the objects from memory. Experiment with other materials such as crayon, felt-tip pens, charcoal...which materials give your drawing the most homely or rustic feel?

Make a pot! Decorate it with enamel paints with images of domestic life. You could paint a plain white mug as an alternative.

### Further Resources

Phillip Hughes, Moira Vincentelli, Elin Jones, Hafina Clwyd, *Lowri Davies*, Denbighshire County Council, Ruthin Craft Centre 2006

<http://www.ceramics-aberystwyth.com/taking-tea-lowri-davies.php>

<http://www.lowridavies.com/>

<http://www.artswales.org.uk/arts-in-wales/inspire/make/creative-wales/creative-wales-archive/awards-2010-11/lowri-davies>

*'There has always been a Welsh influence on my work. It tends to be quite personal. It comes from my grandmother's background and a rural tradition concerning making the home and having crockery around the house.'*

– Lowri Davies



Lowri Davies, Bone China Sugar bowl, Teapot, Small Jug, Cup & Saucer, 2015



*As William Morris Said...* exhibition 2014, Catarina Riccabona, hand woven textiles, 2014. photo: Yuki Sugiura

## Textiles

Textiles may be used decoratively, for personal adornment and home furnishings. Patterns and designs may be produced as part of the process of making the materials (eg crochet, lace, weaving or knitting different colours and textures into the fabric). Some other methods for producing a decorative effect on textiles include:

**Appliqué:** sewing or sticking pieces of fabric onto a larger area of material to produce a picture or pattern.

**Batik:** method originating in Java of producing coloured designs on textiles with dyes, having first applied wax to the parts to be left untreated.

**Embroidery:** the art of working raised ornamental designs and patterns in threads upon fabric with a needle.

**Fabric pens and paint:** commercially available means of drawing or painting dyes onto a fabric (they usually need to be ironed over to fix the colours permanently).

**Patchwork:** needlework in which small pieces of materials in different colours, textures or patterns are sewn together.

**Quilting:** padding and stitching layers of fabric together to create a decorative pattern.

**Screen printing:** method of creating an image on material by pressing dye through a screen with areas blocked out with a stencil.

**Tie dye:** to produce patterns in fabric by tightly binding parts of it to shield it from the dye.

**Transfer printing:** process for transferring a design in coloured dyes from paper to fabric in a heated press.

## Tasks

**Research** patterns and designs in textiles, worldwide eg Japan, Australia, Africa, South America etc. Look at clothes, rugs, ceremonial and everyday fabrics.

**Make** a patchwork cushion cover ...or you could work together as a group to produce a quilt.

**Look** at the paintings of Henri Matisse, Gustav Klimt or Fiona Rae. Make a textile collage or appliqué wall-hanging based on one of their paintings.

**Decorate** a t-shirt! Personalise a plain t-shirt with fabric paints, pens, embroidery, appliqué or tie-die it!

### Further Resources

Cerrutti, Courtney, *Playing with Surface Design: Modern Techniques for Painting, Stamping Printing and More*, Quarry, 2015

Shepard, Lisa, *Global Expressions: Decorating with Fabrics from Around the World*, Krause Publications, 2011

Shoeser, Mary, *World Textiles: a Concise History*, Thames and Hudson, 2006

<http://www.textileschool.com/>

<http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/interactives/art&design/talkingtextiles/howaretextilesdecorated/>

[http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/files/2014/06/Patterns\\_of\\_Culture1.pdf](http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/files/2014/06/Patterns_of_Culture1.pdf)



Ptolemy Mann Prism Sofa for John Lewis, 2011.  
Upholstered in Broadstripe IKAT – Violet Green, woven by David Walters

## Work in Focus: Louise Baldwin

Wednesday 2010

Louise Baldwin's work explores the complexity of everyday life by incorporating found objects, recycled materials such as paper, packaging, wrappers, advertisements etc alongside richly layered textiles and stitching. She explains her approach:

*'I am interested in how we absorb knowledge and life's experiences; selecting out the bits that resonate for us, sometimes carefully, other times by accident. It's what makes us who we are. Connections are made between the most seemingly random things, cell structures, pattern, text and mark. They are like the bits of information, memories and desires that float around our brains waiting to surface. Fabric and stitch seem to be the most obvious materials to use as we are bound to cloth in so many ways. Life is strange and difficult and funny.'*

The wall hanging *Wednesday* reflects a typical, ordinary weekday. Along the top of the image, numbers 0 to 4 appear, possibly to suggest a calendar, marking out the days. Held down by machined stitches are images, patchwork hexagons, scraps of various fabrics and mundane detritus of everyday life, such as light bulb packaging, newspaper cuttings and games cards. This collaged effect recalls the work of Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and pop artists such as Peter Blake which also incorporated found objects and printed materials.

As you look closely at the richly layered surface, the embroidered outline of a woman's face can be made out. According to the artist, she represents no-one in particular, but her mask-like, stylised features are reminiscent of Matisse's emotionless female subjects. The busy, decorative surface of the work also recalls the interior paintings of the French artist. Baldwin claims that nothing in her collaged textiles is pre-planned, but she relies on instinct and spontaneity in arranging the elements that capture the hectic nature of contemporary life.



*'Connections are made between the most seemingly random things, cell structures, pattern, text and mark. They are like the bits of information, memories and desires that float around our brains waiting to surface.'*

– Louise Baldwin

Louise Baldwin,  
*Wednesday*, 2010  
Stitched mixed media;  
60cm x 65cm x 2cm.  
photo: Electric Egg Ltd

## Tasks

**Make** an appliquéd wall hanging in the style of Louise Baldwin. Build up layers with different textures, materials and processes to produce an intricate design. Use sequins, buttons, embroidery, machine stitching, tacks... be inventive!

**Write** a list of words and phrases that you associate with different days of the week. Use your notes to help you create a painting, collage or poem about your favourite day.

**Create** an artwork that incorporates text and numbers.

**Find out** how the days of the weeks were named. What are their names in different languages?

**Make** a self portrait from scraps of fabric, old clothes, labels, pictures etc. Trace the outlines of your features from a photograph and paint or embroider it onto a collaged background.

### Further Resources

<http://www.62group.org.uk/artist/louise-baldwin/>

<http://www.arttextilesmadeinbritain.co.uk/the-artists.html>

<http://www.photostore.org.uk/seCVPG.aspx?MID=24&TYPE=MAKER>



Louise Baldwin, *Thinking about it*, 2013. 61cm x51cm. photo: Sara Leigh Lewis



*Silverstruck exhibition 2011, Adrian Hope, Snowbowl, 2009. photo: Shannon Tofts*

## Jewellery and Metal

Jewellery consists of personal ornaments such as necklaces, rings, or bracelets that are typically made from or contain jewels and precious metal. Examples survive from prehistoric times, suggesting that from an early date, humans have adorned their bodies and clothes with materials such as shells, bones, teeth and stones, and its form and materials varies amongst different cultures worldwide.

In the modern era, jewellery has become valued for artistic and aesthetic reasons rather than for its cost or materials. New technology such as laser welding, allows contemporary jewellers to create increasingly elaborate work, often combining unexpected materials and textures. Designers in the 21st century are increasingly concerned with expanding the parameters of their art and interested in how the objects are displayed. Designers such as Kevin Coates and Wendy Ramshaw create elaborate settings or mini environments that showcase the jewellery in a unique context.

Some methods for decorating or creating patterns in jewellery and metalwork are:

**Embossing:** a pattern is pressed into a material to leave a design in relief.

**Engraving:** removing lines of metal from the surface using a tool called a burin.

**Forging:** a metal shaping process using processes such as hammering, pressing or rolling with tools.

**Inlaying:** when space is routed out of a surface and a contrasting material is fitted inside it.

**Etching:** various methods to produce a tactile texture.

## Tasks

Find out about Wendy Ramshaw's *Room of Dreams* and jewellery as a 'total artwork'. Talk about the range of sources and inspiration for her designs.

**Look** at the different textures and patterns in Pamela Rawnsley's work which was influenced by the Welsh landscape. Make your own designs for jewellery based on natural forms.

**Collect** images of jewellery from magazines, catalogues, brochures or make detailed drawings from items you may have. Use the designs to create an abstract painting inspired by their forms and shapes.

**Research** jewellery and metalwork designs in history and other countries. Visit a museum and study examples of real objects (eg Celtic, Viking, Indian, African, Egyptian etc). Make sketches and take photographs and compile a project sheet.

**Make** a piece of 'junk' jewellery, incorporating found materials such as sweet wrappers, foil, washers, beads, fabrics etc.

### Further Resources

[http://www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/images/artists/Rooms\\_of\\_Dreams.pdf](http://www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/images/artists/Rooms_of_Dreams.pdf)

<http://www.caeraumetals.com/pamelarawnsley/jewellery.php>

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-jewellery/>

[http://www.allaboutgemstones.com/jewelry\\_history\\_early\\_man.html](http://www.allaboutgemstones.com/jewelry_history_early_man.html)



*Touching Gold* exhibition 2011–12, Jacqueline Mina, *Swivel Bracelet*, 2005. photo: Neil Mason



top right: Pamela Rawnsley, *Equinox* brooch, Silver, gold, oxide. d 45mm. bottom right: *Frost* brooch, Silver, oxide. h 75mm, both 2009–11

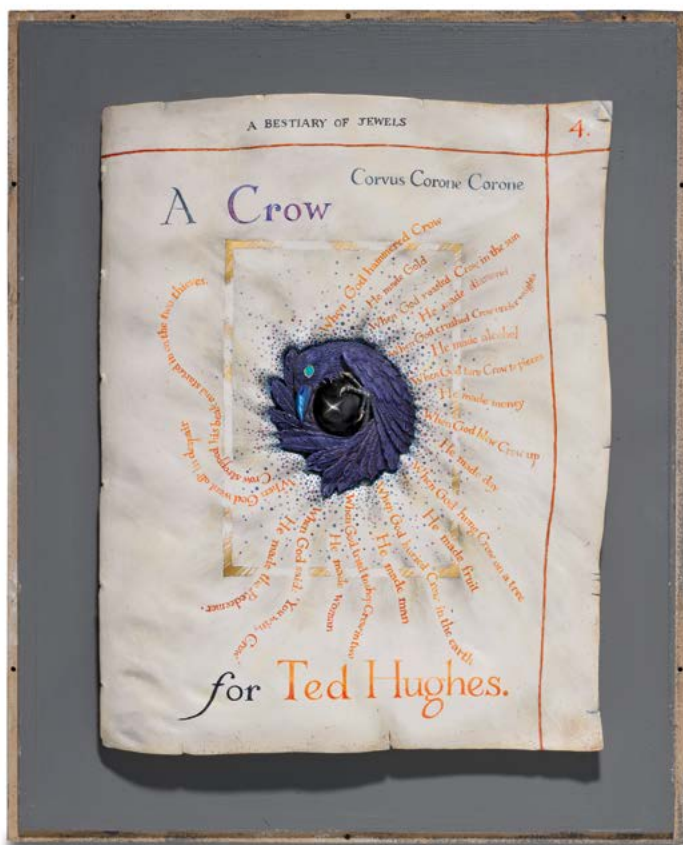
## Work in Focus: Kevin Coates

### *A Crow for Ted Hughes 2012*

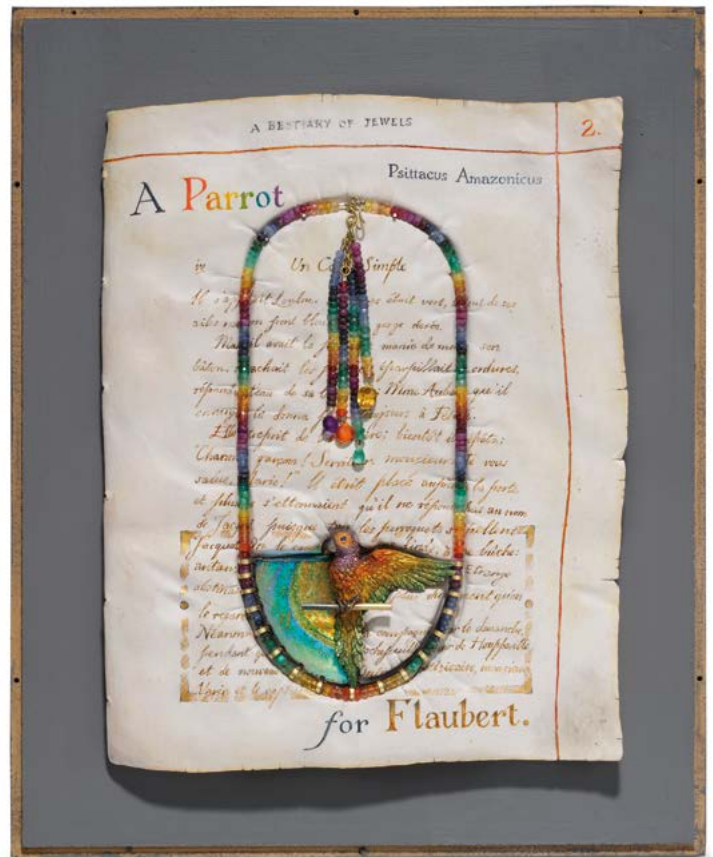
Dr Kevin Coates is an independent artist-jeweller who creates unique jewellery, ceremonial items, medals and small sculptures in a range of materials. He is also a musician, specialising in Baroque and early Classical music. Born in 1950, Kingston, Surrey, he studied Jewellery Design at the Royal College of Art.

*A Crow for Ted Hughes* is taken from *A Bestiary of Jewels*, Kevin Coates's interpretation of the mediaeval collection of tales about animals. Each 'page' takes the form of a wall-mount with an item of jewellery at its centre which may be removed to be worn. The imaginary recipient of each object, based on a series of animals, is a person associated with that creature. The pairs include Charles Dodgson/Dodo; Flaubert/Parrot; Mozart/Starling.

Ted Hughes's crow brooch is mounted at the centre of a modelled and painted bestiary 'page.' Radiating from the bird are the lines of *Crow's Song of Himself* painted in gold to resemble rays of light. This poem was taken from Hughes's dark Crow anthology which were written after the suicide of his wife, Sylvia Plath. The crow is made from blue sulphided silver with a shiny labradorite beak and piercing blue opal eye. Its feathered form is furled around a large diopside which it grasps in vicious metallic talons. This stone is polished to produce its characteristic four-rayed star and the whole composition of the 'page' which Coates describes as 'atomic' revolves around it, placing the crow at the heart of the universe.



Kevin Coates, *A Crow for Ted Hughes*.  
4. Brooch in wall mount. height: 71mm  
width: 66mm. artist's no: 452.MB.12B.  
photo: Clarissa Bruce



Kevin Coates, *A Parrot for Flaubert*. 2. Neckpiece in wall mount. overall height of centre section: 75mm, width: 101.5 mm (pendant section). artist's no: 449.MNP.12B. photo: Clarissa Bruce

## Tasks

**Read** Ted Hughes's *Crow's Song of Himself*. Discuss the relationship between the text and image in Coates's work.

**Look** at other 'pages' from *A Bestiary of Jewels* and find out about the relationship between animal and person in each work. Discover the stories and discuss the choice of materials, colours and composition for each creature and its setting.

**Create** your own bestiary page using collaged materials. Choose your colours and patterns carefully to reflect the character and nature of your creature.

**Make** animal badges by cutting around pictures from magazines (or drawing your own). Decorate with coloured paper, foil, fabric, paint etc.

**Design** a range of jewellery based on animal forms, features or patterns eg snakeskin, leopard's spots, eagle's talons, peacock feathers, zebra stripes, cat's whiskers.

## Further Resources

Coates, Kevin, *A Bestiary of Jewels*, Ruthin Craft Centre 2014

Hughes, Ted, *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow*, Faber and Faber, 1970

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvN\\_SZMoQ3Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvN_SZMoQ3Y)

[http://www.minerals.net/gemstone/diopside\\_gemstone.aspx](http://www.minerals.net/gemstone/diopside_gemstone.aspx)

<http://www.wallacecollection.org/collections/exhibition/91>



*Clearly Drawn* exhibition 2009, Christopher Ainslie, *Felinity*

## Glass

Glass has been employed for decorative purposes and personal adornment since the beginnings of civilisation. Early examples of glass beads which can be traced to 3500 BCE were unearthed by archaeologists in Mesopotamia. Ancient Egyptians not only used this material for utilitarian objects, but also ornaments such as jewellery, vases and vessels for their temples. Glassmaking also took place in China and Southern Asia from c1730 BCE, but the Romans were the first to roll out sheets of glass for the windows of their buildings.

Throughout mediaeval Europe, the material was incorporated in architectural decoration in the form of stained glass windows. Important advances in glass-making processes in the 17th century led to improvements in both the appearance and quality. In contemporary design, glass has become a versatile and expressive medium for a range of arts and crafts, and can be combined with other materials to create three-dimensional, freestyle pieces. In architecture it continues to play an important role in admitting light, providing decorative features and helping to create cultural and spiritual environments in modern buildings.

Some methods of decorating glass include:

**Bubble glass:** bubbles are induced during manufacture for artistic effect.

**Enameling:** applying an enamel coating and firing to give a hard, glossy surface.

**Etching:** technique of creating images on the surface of glass by applying acidic, caustic, or abrasive substances. Traditionally this is done after the glass is blown or cast.

**Frosting:** produced by sandblasting (blasting air or steam laden with sand) It renders the glass translucent by scattering of light during transmission, thus blurring images while still letting in light.

**Screen-printing:** ink is applied directly onto the surface of the glass through a mesh stencil which is then fired to fix the colours.

**Stained glass:** coloured glass used to form decorative or pictorial designs, traditionally by setting contrasting pieces in a lead framework usually of kiln fired glass.

## Tasks

**Decorate** a drinking glass, jar or photo frame with glass paints or mosaic tiles.

**Create** a necklace or bracelet with glass beads.

**Discover** the glass engraving of Ronald Pennell – how can glass objects be used as a vehicle for telling stories?

**Research** stained glass throughout history – collect images, make notes, take photographs of stained glass windows in your town.

**Find out** about prisms, reflections, refractions, colour and light!

### Further Resources

Cormack, Peter, *Art & Crafts Stained Glass*, Yale University Press, 2015

Payne, Vicky, *Stained Glass for Dummies*, John Wiley & Sons, 2010

Raguin, Virginia Chieffo and Higgins, Mary Clerkin, *The History of Stained Glass: The Art of Light Mediaeval to Contemporary*, Thames and Hudson 2008

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rO9ppNYIBZA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lsh9zHG26YI>

<http://www.nationalglasscentre.com/learn/activitiescoursesandclasses/familyactivities/>



Ronald Pennell,  
*Remembering  
Knightshayes*,  
Wheel engraved  
over cased glass  
16x20cm

## Work in Focus: Catrin Jones

*TORCH Centre Window,*

*Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Hospital, Oswestry 2008*

Catrin Jones was born in Cardigan 1960 and studied Architectural Stained Glass at the Swansea School of Art, graduating with distinction in 1982. As a student she won the first prize for glass at the National Eisteddfod twice and as a professional designer, has undertaken a wide range of commissions, mostly in the public domain.

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital provides orthopaedic surgery and specialist musculoskeletal services. The Orthopaedic Research for Children Centre (TORCH) which opened at the end of 2008, and is dedicated to the assessment of children with walking and mobility problems. Catrin Jones was commissioned to create a window for the entrance lobby of the new building. The design, depicting water and children's footprints in sand has been silkscreened onto float glass and incorporated into double-glazed units by Proto Studios Ltd. Catrin has stated: 'Whilst my work should be accessible, the visual language should not be compromised by being literal or obvious. The work should be both meaningful and a visual challenge. Influences I often design using collage, because the results are always surprising. Source material varies from archive photographs, my own collage material or pages from magazines. I like to play around with scale, taking small objects that we might take for granted and turning them into much larger, totemic images. Before designing for a commission, I usually research strong visual images appropriate to the brief. I like images to evoke other ideas and feelings so that, if you want to investigate the design, further meanings evolve if you look for them. I think this layering of meaning underpins the work and gives it integrity.'

She is interested in the capacity of glass to both reflect and transmit light and its power to affect the human spirit. Here, the dominant colour of blue, with its associations of sea and sky helps to evoke a relaxing mood. The abstract forms flow diagonally across the window, creating a sense of movement and freedom that contrasts with the rigid grid of the containing structure. The interplay between colour, glass, the pattern of footprints and dappled light on the hospital floor, creates a magical environment and an image of aspiration in a place associated with hope and healing.



*'Most of my designs are descriptive in that the imagery usually relates somehow to the provenance, history or function of the building.'*

– Catrin Jones

Catrin Jones,  
TORCH Centre Window,  
Robert Jones & Agnes  
Hunt Hospital, Oswestry  
2008. Photo: the artist

## Tasks

**Paint** an abstract design inspired by landscape onto a sheet of glass or photo frame with enamel paints.

**Design** a window for a public building in your town, eg school, sports stadium, church, supermarket, library etc. Think about the people who use or occupy the building, consider the location – what will the glass reflect? Make sketches - work out your ideas with notes and drawings and paintings.

**Look** at windows! Talk about the different forms, shapes and sizes they take depending on the style and function of building eg Palladian, oriel, lancet, bow, casement etc. Make a painting based on window shapes.

**Make** a sun-catcher! (<http://artfulparent.com/stained-glass-suncatcher-ideas-kids>)

**Write** a description or poem about patterns and reflections of light in water.

### Further Resources

Bird-Jones, Chris and Jones Catrin, *Glass : Laboratory of the Spirit : New Work in Glass*, Ruthin Craft Centre, 1999

<http://www.catrinjones.co.uk/>

<http://www.axisweb.org/p/catrinjones/>

<http://www.cgs.org.uk>

<http://www.nationalglasscentre.com>



Catrin Jones, TORCH Centre Window, Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Hospital, Oswestry 2008. Photo: the artist



*Is it Wood?* exhibition 2014, Sophie Smallhorn, *Component Cube 1*, 2013, 145x145x145mm

## Wood

Due to its abundance in most parts of the world, wood has been a preferred medium for crafts throughout history. The most obvious way of producing decoration in this material is through carving with chisels. Paint or gilding can be applied for ornamentation, though many contemporary woodworkers prefer to emphasise the natural grain of the material. Staining or varnishing surfaces helps to preserve and protect the wood. Other means of producing decorative effect on wood include:

**Inlaying:** inserting, embedding or applying shaped pieces of contrasting materials, flush with the surface

**Laminating:** overlaying the surface with a layer of different wood, plastic or other protective, more durable material

**Distressing:** making wood look old, worn or weathered.

**Varnishing:** applying resin dissolved in liquid to produce a hard, clear, shiny surface.

**Staining:** applying a colorant, suspended or dissolved in an agent or solvent.

### Wood in Welsh Traditional Crafts

Wood carving is a traditional craft in many countries, including Wales.

Some examples of Welsh folk art include:

- Lovespoons – decoratively carved with symbols such as hearts, horseshoes, keys etc. These spoons were not functional utensils but decorative objects to be presented as a gift of romantic intent.
- Stick Chairs – deceptively simple in design, many demonstrate great skill in outline shaping, fretwork, turning and carved backs.

- Dressers – originally meant as utilitarian kitchen furniture, dressers became more elaborately carved as they were used for displaying crockery and ornaments in wealthier homes.

## Tasks

**Find out** about woodcarving in Welsh folk history – lovespoons, stick chairs, dressers etc. Make sketches, copy the decorative details, make your own designs.

**Take** rubbings of different tree bark with crayon and paper.

**Make** a relief sculpture with scraps of wood eg toothpicks, matches, corks, pegs, ice lolly sticks etc. Stick the pieces to a board with wood glue and paint or varnish your completed work.

**Paint** your own designs on cheap wooden spoons, trays, boxes or other old household objects.

### Further Resources

Carving Out Space Resource Pack [http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk/learning/\\_resources-2/](http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk/learning/_resources-2/)  
<http://www.architectureartdesigns.com/40-phenomenal-diy-wood-home-decorations/>  
<http://www.welsh-love-spoons.co.uk/history>  
[http://www.collectors-club-of-great-britain.co.uk/Features/A-Brief-History-of-the-Welsh-Dresser/\\_ft1828](http://www.collectors-club-of-great-britain.co.uk/Features/A-Brief-History-of-the-Welsh-Dresser/_ft1828)  
<http://www.welshantiques.com/antique-stickchairs-article.html>  
<http://www.thecraftycrow.net/woodwork/>



left: Jim Partridge, *Gold & black bowl*, 2012. right: *Smile* Exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2010



Fred Baier, *Cornucopia*. photo: Matt Ryan

## Work in Focus: Fred Baier

### *Prism Chair* 1993 / re-lacquered 2010

Fred Baier is an avant garde furniture designer who has been experimenting with radical structures and forms since the 1970s. His work draws upon a wide range of sources, from industrial imagery to science fiction. He is particularly interested in the application of mathematics, geometry and theories of proportion to his designs. He also explores different ways of colouring and decorating his wood, sometimes disguising the character of the material, but often emphasising the natural grain which shows through unexpectedly bright colours and stains.

*Prism Chair* could equally be described as a post-modern sculpture. It does not look remotely like traditional furniture. It is composed of three prismatic forms that appear to be stacked on top of each other. The MDF surfaces are covered with high gloss finishes and every facet looks different, intersecting at odd angles. Originally designed in 1989, *Prism Chair* was one of the first pieces of British furniture to be made with the help of a computer. In order to work out how the planes would fit together, Baier consulted his friend Paul McManus who was experimenting with computer aided design. Together, using a 3D modelling programme (VAMP), they produced a set of computer sketches for the chair.

"I said to myself, why don't you do a chair that doesn't look like a chair? Make it out of lumps of geometry?"

Fred Baier

## Tasks

**Research** modern furniture design – collect images, make sketches, construct models, design your own chair!

**Make** an abstract sculpture with blocks of balsa wood or cardboard boxes. Use coloured paper, wallpaper, paint etc to decorate the forms.

**Compare** and contrast the design of Prism Chair with a traditional Welsh stick seat or a wooden chair in your home or classroom. Imagine sitting on Baier's chair – do you think it looks comfortable?

**Design** a *Prism Table* to go with *Prism Chair*...or a desk, bed, settee, cupboard etc...

### Further Resources

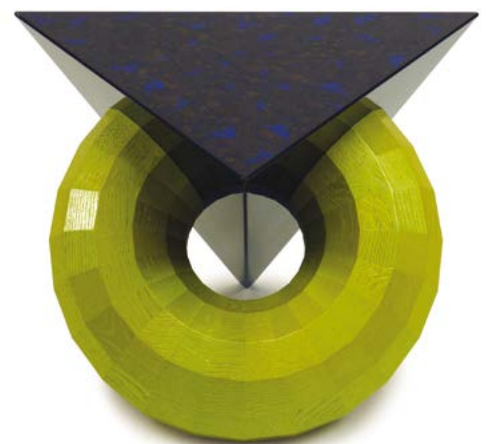
Baier, Fred, *The Right Angle*, Ruthin Craft Centre and Craft Study Centre, 2012

<http://www.fredbaier.com/>

<http://www.fredbaier.com/words/by-others/p/glenn-adamson>

<http://www.fredbaier.com/words/by-others/p/richard-bateman>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100910155734/http://vam.ac.uk/things-to-do/blogs/sketch-product/lumps-geometry>



above: Fred Baier, *Tetrahedron & Toroid*. photo: Fred Baier.  
left: Fred Baier, *'Prism' chair*, 1989/1993. Lacquer; MDF. h: 71cm, w: 61cm, d: 63.5 cm. photo: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Andrew Logan, *An Artistic Adventure* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2008

## Sculpture

Sculpture has historically been used to decorate buildings in the form of friezes, architectural mouldings and details, free-standing statues and art objects. Sculpture associated with elaborately decorative architectural styles such as Baroque and Rococo was also free-flowing and ornamental in character.

Over-fussy or decorative sculpture is usually referred to as 'kitsch' and historically, this has been associated with 'folk art' rather than 'fine art.' Since the 1960s, however, many artists (eg Jeff Koons, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Andrew Logan) have deliberately adopted this 'kitschy' style for their works in order to challenge perceived ideas of taste.

## Tasks

**Walk** around your town and look out for architectural details and sculptures that decorate the buildings. Take photographs, make sketches, find out what they represent and why they are there!

**Discuss** the differences between 'folk art', 'fine art', 'anti-art' and 'kitsch'.

**Research** Baroque and Rococo styles in sculpture.

**Make** a frieze in paper, cardboard and mixed media for a wall in your classroom. You could choose a theme that relates to your school, town, a local or national event.

### Further Resources

<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/sculpture/styles/architectural.htm>

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=fej>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30439633>

Away exhibition 2014, Julie Arkell, *the impatient pram* (detail). photo: Dewi Tannatt Lloyd



## Work in Focus: Andrew Logan

### *Elizabeth Taylor 2000*

Fashion designer Zandra Rhodes described Andrew Logan as 'living art.' She said, "He weaves his whole life and that of his friends into a magic web, whether it is immortalising them in mirrored sculpture busts or covering them in jewellery." English performance artist, jewellery maker, sculptor and key figure in the London cultural and fashion scene, Logan was the founder of the Alternative Miss World event in 1972. The purpose built Andrew Logan Museum of Sculpture at Berriew, Mid Wales is a vehicle for exhibiting his works in a vibrant, imaginative context and claims to be 'the only museum in Europe dedicated to a living artist.' It opened in 1991 with its mission to stage 'events that would share his vision and skill for curating performance and spectacle.

Logan's influences are global, multi-cultural and drawn from both fine art and popular culture. He believes that 'art can be discovered anywhere' and his unique assemblages are formed from a range of materials from precious stones to found objects. The portrait of actress and glam icon, Elizabeth Taylor is one of a series of wall reliefs created by Logan, portraits of his celebrity friends. The wooden cut-out shape of Liz's face forms a base for layers of paint, glitter, beads, glass, resin and other materials to construct her instantly recognisable public image. The face is stylised and mask-like, bringing to mind her namesake and another woman whose image was deified, Elizabeth I. Tudor portraits of the English queen portrayed a strong, emotionless image richly bejewelled as a symbol of wealth and power. As an actress, Taylor was always wearing a mask. Is Logan asking us to look beneath the layers of make-up/paint to see the real Liz with those intensely blue eyes? Or does he revel in the fakery, the glitz, the constructed beauty, the artistry?



'My reason for living  
is to give enjoyment and  
pleasure to others through  
quirky, humorous and  
extravagant mementoes'

Andrew Logan

*Elizabeth Taylor 2000.*  
photo: Dewi Tannatt Lloyd



Andrew Logan, *An Artistic Adventure* exhibition, 2008

## Tasks

**Research** how other artists have represented celebrities (eg Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, Julian Opie etc).

**Make** a relief sculpture in the style of Andrew Logan of a glamorous celebrity in the 21st century. You could start with a line drawing, traced from an iconic image and build up your collage with layers of materials.

**Find out** about Elizabeth Taylor – her life, her public image, her films and the characters she played. How has she been portrayed in art?

**Look** at masks! Visit a local museum and make sketches of masks from different countries. Look at the work of artists who were influenced by African and Oceanic masks (eg Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani). Make your own mask!

**Visit** the Andrew Logan Museum at Berriew! How does it differ from other galleries or museums that you have been to? Make notes on display techniques, interior decoration and the exhibits.

### Further Resources

Logan, Andrew; Hughes, Phillip; Podschies, Fennah, Andrew Logan: *An Artistic Adventure*, Ruthin Craft Centre, 2008

Pih, Darren, *Glam the Performance of Style*, Tate Publishing, 2013

<http://andrewloganmuseum.org/>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b\\_ckgP\\_CRvI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_ckgP_CRvI)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhTJzhSASBQ>

# Wallpaper

The Chinese first began to glue rice paper to their walls from c200 BCE. By the 12th century, papermaking had become widespread throughout Europe and wallpaper developed as an alternative to other traditional forms of wall decoration such as frescoes, murals and tapestries. The earliest known surviving example of wallpaper in Europe was discovered on the beams of the Lodge, Christ's College, Cambridge which dates from 1509. It shows an Italianate pomegranate design and it is attributed to Hugo Goes, a printer from York.

Wallpaper made with wood-cuts became popular in Renaissance Europe amongst the emerging merchant classes. Sheets of patterned paper and unframed prints were hung loosely or pasted directly onto the wall to add decoration to their homes. The innovative artist Albrecht Dürer was one of the earliest artists to exploit the new medium of print-making and he worked on both picture prints and wall hangings. The Triumphal Arch 1515, which he produced for the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, consisted of 192 sheets of paper and was printed in a limited edition of 700 copies.

Examples of early wallpaper can be seen at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire (hand-painted Chinese wallpaper dating to 1830) and Erddig where the grand rooms are lined with wallpaper dating as far back as 1714. Though hand-painted paper imported from China remained popular as a luxury item, England and France were the leading manufacturers of wallpaper in Europe from late 17th-19th century:

- Jean-Michel Papillon, French wood-engraver and printer is considered the inventor of wallpaper as we know it. He began producing block designs in matching continuous patterns from his studio in 1675. Wallpaper or 'stained paper' was produced in squares until the early 19th century, which meant that it was too expensive for most homes.
- During the reign of Queen Anne in 1712 a wallpaper tax was introduced in Britain which was not abolished until 1836. However, as it only applied to coloured paper, the tax could be avoided by decorating rooms with plain coverings and then stencilling colour by hand once it was on the walls.
- In the 1750s, French haberdasher and tradesman Jean-Baptiste Révillon began to commission designers working in silk and tapestry to produce extravagant, luxurious wallpaper. In 1775 he opened a paper mill to improve the quality and quantity of his production and business was further boosted when Marie Antoinette papered the rooms of her apartments and the Montgolfier Brothers decorated the first hot-air balloons with his wares.
- 1799 Louis Nicolas Robert patented a machine for producing continuous lengths of printed paper and this had a great impact on the wallpaper industry. In Britain, the development of steam-powered printing presses in 1813 made mass-production of cheaper wallpaper possible, making it affordable to all classes for brightening up their homes.
- The repeal of the wallpaper tax in 1836 encouraged Victorian designers to produce increasingly elaborate and intricate patterns. Wallpaper manufacturing firms established in England in the 19th century included: Jeffrey & Co.; Shand Kydd Ltd; John Line & Sons; Potter & Co; Townshend & Parker; Morris & Co.

In the twentieth century, Wallpaper became established as one of the most popular items in interior design across the Western world. Though fashions in wall-covering and decoration have changed, patterned wallpaper has remained a popular alternative to plain painted walls in the 21st century.

## Glossary

**Anaglypta** – became popular in the late 19th century, especially for the lower parts of walls below a dado rail. Though more expensive, they could be painted and washed and were more hard-wearing.

**Flock** – developed in the 17th century, the process involved printing or stencilling the design in adhesive onto a background of painted paper or linen and scattering small shearings of wool over the adhesive to produce a velvet-like pile over the chosen design.

**Hand-printed** – paper that has been decorated by hand using the original method with a large printing block, covering the width of the wallpaper and height of the complete pattern repeat. This method is labour-intensive and therefore very expensive.

**Lincrusta** – thick, durable wallpaper made from gelled linseed oil, capable of being embossed or moulded into raised patterns. Launched in 1877 by Frederick Walton who also patented linoleum floor covering in 1860.

**Vinyl** – tough, washable covering consisting of thin skin of plastic with a paper backing. Ideal for kitchens and bathrooms.

**Woodchip** – relatively cheap paper consisting of fine chips of wood on the finished side. Used for hiding small defects in surfaces and usually painted.

## Tasks

**Research** pioneers in wallpaper design eg Owen Jones, Walter Crane, Lewis F Day, William Morris, and Charles Voysey. Make copies of their designs. Can you see examples of their work today?

**Find out** about modern artists who have designed wallpaper eg Andy Warhol, Robert Gober, Sarah Lucas, Damien Hirst, Sonia Boyce etc. Design wallpaper based on the work of your favourite artist.

**Discuss** the work of contemporary wallpaper designers Sharon Elphick, Michael Clarke, Martin Boyce, Deborah Bowness, Ella Doran, St Judes, Mini Moderns, Timorous Beasties, Marthe Armitage... How has wallpaper changed in the last two centuries? Collect samples of wall coverings. Discuss why a range of materials, weights and textures are produced for different rooms.

**Make** a repeated pattern on lining paper using stencils, wood blocks or potato prints. Design wall-coverings for the house of the future! Imagine how people of the 22nd century will decorate their homes. Write a description and make drawings. Be inventive!

## Further Resources

Hook, Jason, Wendy and the Wallpaper Cat, V&A, 2015

[http://www.wallpaperinstaller.com/wallpaper\\_history.html](http://www.wallpaperinstaller.com/wallpaper_history.html)

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/w/study-guide-wallpapers/>

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/short-introductory-history-of-wallpaper/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-11456363>

<http://www.bradbury.com/index.html>

## Work in Focus: William Morris, *Trellis* 1864



William Morris was an English textile designer, artist, writer and socialist associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artists. He began making wallpaper in the 1860s with designs that were hand-printed by Jeffrey & Co. of London, using wood blocks. Morris and his contemporaries reacted against the excesses of mid-century designs and the increasing industrialisation of the arts and crafts. Inspired by the mediaeval guilds and artists, he aimed to restore good taste in interior design and to re-establish quality workmanship.

He took his inspiration from nature and created intricate designs based on the free-flowing forms of plants. The rhythms, though often seemingly random, are tightly controlled and symmetrical. This gives an overall harmony and structure to a design and allows the patterns to be repeated.

His stylised evocations of nature came from a variety of sources: gardens, parks, country walks, mediaeval tapestries, wall-hangings, illuminated manuscripts and 16th century woodcuts, which he collected. His first design, Trellis 1862 was based on the latticework his rose garden in Bexleyheath, Kent. The interweaving stems of the rose and lively birds perching on the slats, contrast with the rigid grid of the trellis. The intricate plant-forms help to disguise the joins in the strips of the wallpaper whilst the geometry of the grid makes lining up the repeated pattern easier.

Morris went on to create over fifty wallpapers and though not an immediate commercial success, his company has enjoyed increasing popularity over the past century and proved to have lasting appeal. Although he was a great socialist who believed that art should be accessible to all, the products that Morris & Co created were hand-made and very expensive. It is also interesting to note that he personally regarded wallpaper as a makeshift means of covering a wall and preferred to decorate his own houses with luxurious textiles.

## Tasks

**Find out** about William Morris and his other activities and interests (eg art, stained glass, textiles etc). What was the Arts and Crafts movement? Who were the Pre-Raphaelite artists?

**Make** detailed drawings from life of flowers and plants and use these drawings as a basis for designing a pattern that can be repeated.

**Research** Morris & Co – the history, the range of patterns and the designers who have worked for the company.

**Imagine** that you are wallpapering your home in Morris designs. Which patterns would you choose for each room and what influences your choice?

## Further Resources

McCarthy, Fiona, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, Faber & Faber, 2010

Morris, William, *Full Colour Patterns and Designs*, Dover Publications Inc, 1989

Naylor, Dr Gillian, and Bernard, Bruce, *William Morris by Himself: Designs and Writing*, Little, Brown, 2000

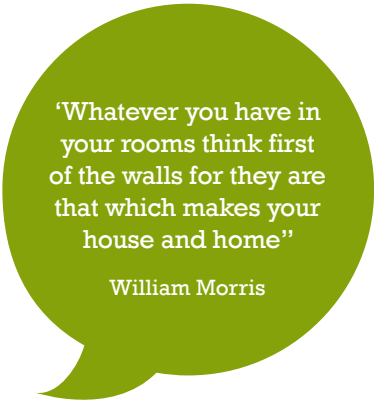
Parry, Linda, *V&A Pattern: William Morris*, V&A Publishing, 2009

<https://www.william-morris.co.uk/>

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/w/william-morris/>

<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/morris/wmbio.html>

Trellis woodblock printed wallpaper, by William Morris, England, 1864. Museum no. E.452-1919, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



‘Whatever you have in your rooms think first of the walls for they are that which makes your house and home’

William Morris



top right image: Norman Makinson, *Cock and two Hens*, 2010. photo: Dewi Tannatt Lloyd

## Christmas Decorations

The word 'Christmas' derives from the old English phrase 'Cristes Maesse' – Christ's mass or religious service. Besides being a Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus, it is an occasion when family and friends come together to share in traditional customs, some of which actually have their origins in pagan festivities.

Mid-winter in the Northern hemisphere coincides with the Christmas period. Many ancient people believed that the sun was a god and he disappeared during the winter solstice as he was weak or ill. The evergreen boughs which they decorated their homes with represented the continuance of life through winter and reminded them that the sun would return in spring. The Romans also held a mid-winter festival of Saturnalia, dedicated to the harvest god Saturn, decking their houses and temples with evergreens.

The ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun god Ra, who had a hawk's head and wore a crown with the emblem of a blazing disc. They filled their homes with green palm rushes to symbolise the triumph of life over death during the solstice when Ra would begin to regain his powers. The Vikings had a similar god, Balder and the Druids also worshipped the sun and believed that evergreens had mysterious powers.

Listed below are some of the decorations and motifs associated with Christmas and a brief description of their histories and origins:

**Robin:** Postmen in Victorian England were nicknamed 'robins' due to their red uniforms. Early Christmas cards often depicted these birds delivering Christmas cards. Their red breasts also carried religious significance, symbolising the blood of Christ and the Crucifixion.

**Holly:** the red berries also symbolised drops of blood and the prickly leaves, the crown of thorns worn by Christ. Holly and ivy are evergreens and besides their religious association with eternal life through Christ, they are a common pagan symbol.



**Mistletoe:** as it grows on their sacred oak, the Druids believed mistletoe to possess special powers that kept the deciduous tree alive during the winter. They dedicated mistletoe to the goddess of love, which explains the tradition of kissing beneath it.

**Christmas tree:** the custom of decorating an evergreen tree with candles began as a symbol of Christian faith in 16th century Germany. If wood was scarce, they would build a model tree, with boxes.

The Christmas tree was introduced to Britain by George III's German-born wife, Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz for a children's party in 1800. This became part of the royal family's Christmas celebrations and Queen Victoria recalled a tree in every room as a child. Following her marriage to her German cousin Prince Albert, the custom became widespread amongst wealthier families. In 1846, the London Illustrated News featured a sketch of the Royal Family, gathered around a Christmas tree at Windsor Castle and the custom soon became fashionable, not just in Europe, but worldwide.



**Tree decorations:** the original Weihnachtsbaum in Germany was decorated with fruit, nuts and other foods that were sometimes wrapped in colourful paper (later replaced by baubles, small gifts and chocolates). Candles as a symbol of Christ as 'Light of the World' were also common. These were replaced by electric lights in the 20th century. An angel or star usually crowned the tree to represent the archangel Gabriel from the Annunciation or the Star of Bethlehem. Bells refer to church bells which ring to celebrate the birth of Christ.

**Crackers:** the traditional table decoration was invented by Thomas Smith in 1848. The idea came from French bon-bons or sugared almonds that were wrapped in tissue paper with a twist at either end. Smith introduced a love poem in the 1850s and then the chemically impregnated paper strip in the 1890s which gave it the explosive title. As other manufacturers copied his Christmas crackers, he replaced the sweet with a hat in the early 20th century and as his sons took over the business, the poems gave way to jokes.

**Party hats:** often included in crackers, the coloured paper crowns worn at Christmas possibly have their origins in the Roman Saturnalia festivities.

**Christmas cards:** the wealthy businessman, Sir Henry Cole created and sent the first card in 1843. He commissioned the artist John Calcott Horsley to design the card which showed a traditional Victorian family, so that he could send seasonal greetings to his friends and professional acquaintances. He had 1,000 copies made and sold individual cards at one shilling each. Early cards showed religious scenes or families celebrating Christmas but today's designs range includes winter landscapes, art prints, abstract designs, cute animals, humorous cartoons etc. Personalised cards can be made with family photographs, tourist cards with greetings from a specific place, corporate cards produced by businesses and institutions for their clients and customers, charity cards etc.

**Nativity Scene:** model of a stable with figures of shepherds, magi, Mary and Joseph telling the story of the Nativity. The baby Jesus is traditionally added to the crib on Christmas Eve.

**Yule log:** the Northern European festival of 'yule' took place in mid-winter. Pagans burned a large log at the end of the year to destroy the previous year's evil.







## Tasks

**Discuss** how Christmas decorations have changed throughout history. Find examples of Victorian cards, tree decorations etc. Compare them to those on sale today. Talk about the modern trends in decorating the outside of a house with lights as well as the interior. Do you decorate your home at Christmas?

**Design** a Christmas card! Make your card different – think of your own images rather than robins, snowmen, trees etc. Use your imagination to make a 21st century Christmas card!

**Make** decorations from recycled materials (eg an advent calendar from cardboard packaging, magazines etc; a nativity scene from boxes, cut-out or plastic figures etc).

**Illustrate** a Christmas Carol, song or film.

**Make** a Christmas party hat from the discarded wrapping paper from your presents! You could turn this into a competition – who can create the most inventive hat?

### Further Resources

Connelly, Mark, *Christmas: a Social History*, I.B.Tauris, 2012

Ratsch, Christian and Muller Ebeling, Claudia, *Pagan Christmas: The Plants, Spirits and Rituals at the Origins of Yuletide*, Inner Traditions Bear and Co, 2006

Watt, Fiona and Johansson, Caroline, *Big Book of Christmas Decorations to Cut, Fold and Stick*, Usborne Publications, 2013

<http://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees>

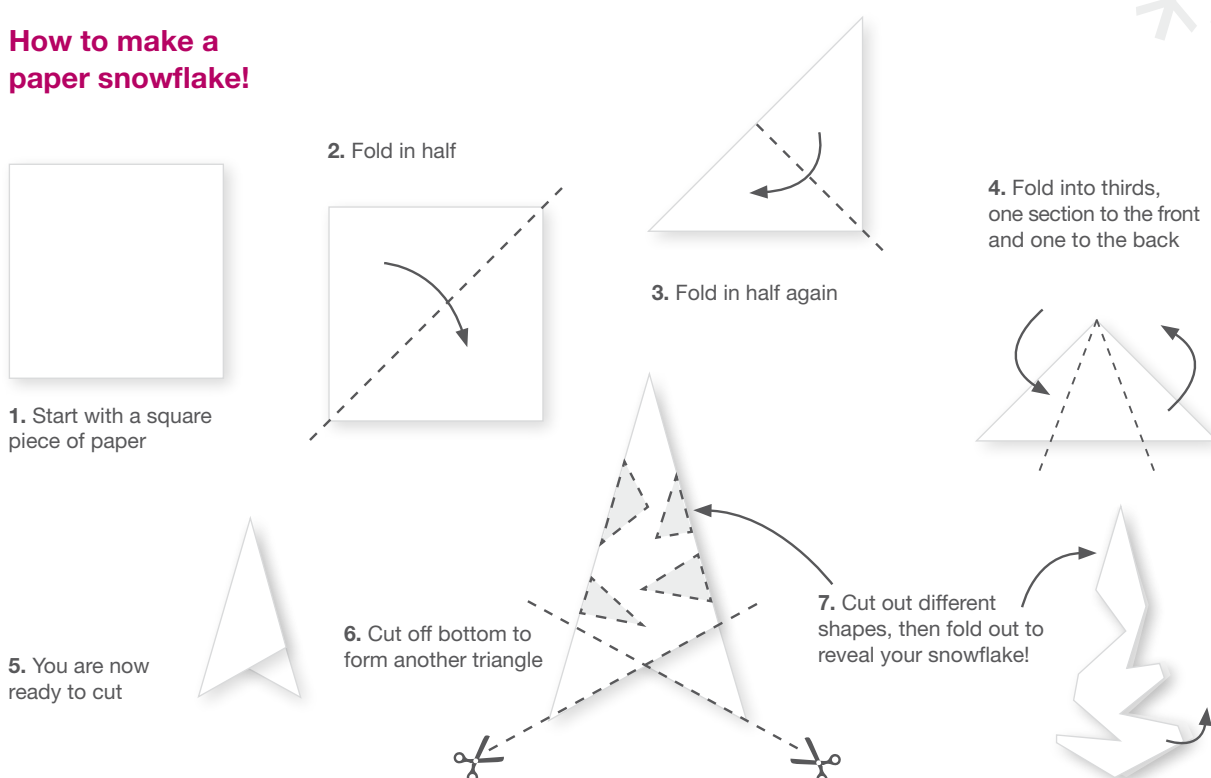
<http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/trees.shtml>

<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/xmas/decorations.html>

<http://www.history.uk.com/christmas/christmas-decorations-traditions-ch/>



### How to make a paper snowflake!





Ptolemy Mann, *VORTEX Furnishing Fabric*, 2011. Digital Artwork

## Acknowledgements

### This learning pack was created by Julie Robson.

Julie Robson is an independent art historian and gallery educator, working with museums and galleries in Merseyside and North Wales. She studied Art, Architecture and Literature at the University of Nottingham and has a Masters degree in Contemporary Art, University of Liverpool. Besides Ruthin Craft Centre, she has written interpretative material and teachers' resources for Tate Liverpool, MOSTYN and the Victoria Gallery and Museum. Julie regularly gives public talks at the Walker Art Gallery and Lady Lever and teaches at the School of Lifelong Learning, University of Liverpool. She is also a practicing artist, working in mixed media and ceramics.

**what is craft?** Second Season 'decoration'  
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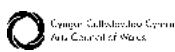
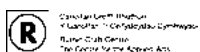
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Ruthin Craft Centre  
The Centre for the Applied Arts  
Park Road, Ruthin,  
Denbighshire LL15 1BB  
Tel: +44 (0)1824 704774  
[www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk](http://www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk)



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# what is craft?



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and claim your  
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decoration

process

function

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[ruthincraftcentre.org.uk](http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk)



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