

Anne Kelly – Video 1

Philip: This is Anne Kelly's exhibition 'Well Travelled'. Anne is well travelled, she has a wanderlust that takes her to many different places, but she also comes from a background of people who have moved continents and countries, and in the work you'll find many many layers of memories, references to different societies and different places their fauna and in particularly the migrating birds which I think are quite fascinating.

Anne has come to Ruthin with this show, and we hope it will tour afterwards, and with no more to say here is Anne Kelly

Anne: Thank you

This piece is called 'Unfinished Journey: Boat' and it is the centrepiece of the exhibition. I wanted a boat for the centrepiece because I'm from Canada originally and canoes are a big part of Canadian culture, they also represent journeys and I feel my journey is unfinished.

I was gifted the fabric panels that you see on the outside and the paper panels that you can't really see on the inside of the boat. The panels are printed embroidery kits that a student gave me and I laminated them together with paper transfers which are on the inside to make pieces/ sections of cloth, I made a pattern for the skeleton to cover the boat with, and then it was pinned, stitched and glued into place.

This boat skeleton came from a family in Yorkshire, whose children had made it in school about 40 years ago, and it was hanging in their garage. It was rescued by myself and my husband, we took it home, we washed it, I painted it, and this is what you see. It comes apart in two sections, and is quite lightweight.

For me it represents journeys unfinished and also everyday activities. I've put little prints on the side there is a lamp, a phone, a book so it really about small journeys as well as big journeys, journeys around home which we've noticed more in the pandemic, but also we connect our journeys outside with journeys from home.

In this panel here you can see for example there is a piece of found folk art stitching which has been added on top, there is also a little patch of shoes which are representing everyday journeys. You can see the hand stitching that joins the panels together, you can also see the overall machine stitching which is something I do to layer and laminate pieces of fabric together.

I like the way the colours don't match, they're all slightly different versions of linen and heavy cotton but they do complement each other as it covers the shape of the boat. I added some lace, which was crocheted lace all the way around, just to finish the edge and to cover the upholstery pins which are holding it in place.

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Anne Kelly – Video 2

This piece is called 'Europeans', and it's a composite piece. In the centre there is a map of Europe made of different elements showing architectural pieces as well as the waters. It is a piece of quilt which I've screen printed, embellished, appliquéd and hand stitched pieces to.

The piece is really is symbolic of Europe as a place but also as an idea, especially with the current progression in politics in Britain with Brexit and migration, but it's also a family piece. The members of my immediate family are at the top you can see a self-portrait in the middle. The dresses are representative of missing members of the family or past memories, these formed part of another piece that I did based on the family and the family history.

My father was a refugee from Germany, and I'm a migrant to the UK, my mother's family were migrants to Canada. Now we tend to link travel with enjoyment and leisure, but there is also the element of travel isn't always a happy thing for people, people have to move for work, for health, for lots of different reasons, and of course with the Covid pandemic that has changed our perception of travel. Where travelling a short distance seems longer, and long distances seem shorter in a funny kind of way through Zoom and that kind of communication.

I've also included some writing in this piece, elements, words, phrases to do with identity, immigration, travel and thought.

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Anne Kelly – Video 3

This is another composite piece, and it was from my textile folk art themed work. Each of these panels are different tree of life motifs, which is a very common motif in folk art.

They are all based on different areas and parts of the world so I've tried to use different colours, textures, and prints of fabric in each one and I think it gives each section a different mood or feel. When I put them all together it felt a bit disjointed and almost like it wasn't a finished piece so I made some trees to join the motifs together, the sections together and their quite big pieces running through the middle but I think it unifies the piece.

I do put a lot of birds in my work and I think there is something to do with the transitory nature and migration of birds that really interest me. Also reflected in my work, it reflects and combines with the theme of travel and migration.

My mother always said why don't I do picture of birds and I never really did until later on in my career and then I really appreciated what she was trying to say, because birds are so varied and yet they are everywhere they are almost an everyday object or thing that we see in pictures, so I've tried to use them in the piece in different parts of the piece to give emphasis but also to bring out the different layers and levels of the trees.

In this section there is a parrot which is an embroidered decal taken from another piece of found embroidery, and there are different birds, different colours but really this pieces was meant to represent tropical rainforest and tropical colours.

There is also a section of a glove in here that you can just see which has been printed on, and I do like to have found objects, and bits of clothing as part of the base of the piece because it gives you something to build on, so you can often see elements of clothing not necessarily a whole piece here but there is a collar of a garment in here as well, so there are lots of different layers the more you look at this the more you start to see different little things like little bird houses and other bird embroideries and prints as well.

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Anne Kelly – Video 4

This series of seven individual folding books called 'Park Walk sketchbooks'. These came about during the pandemic, really looking at different types of walks I'd take in my local area.

I was inspired by a student, who had made a little tag when I was doing my travel tags project for the knitting and stitch show. She did one little tag that had the door of every house that she'd ever lived in, and it was such a lovely, beautiful, little piece that I decided to borrow that idea in a way and look at the different places that I had lived as the subject for each folding book.

I love doing folding books and it's a technique that I use a lot in teaching where we laminate paper and fabric together. So these folding books have elements of map, documents, bits of fabric, tissue paper, and quite a lot of free motion embroidery, so photograph or vignettes of people taken from different stages in my various walks in different areas that I've lived in.

There is a lot of detail, but there is also a sense of the unfolding again, and the travelling. They're narrative pieces, if you look closely you can see a bit of a story in each one.

For presentation, I thought it would be really nice to make a case using an old book cover. They are hanging from the cases but can be detached and folded up inside. They are finished on both sides, so the rear side has a slight piece of muslin cover, and then hand stitched to finish them off.

If you look closely you can see that there are lots of details, this one has some old documents, postage stamps, natural history pages from a book, free motion embroidery, hand stitched along the edges, and also some previous work which I've combined with it, which is something I like to do a lot actually use old pieces of work. There is an old strip of embroidery running down the middle, which I think adds a little more texture as well.