



How To Be Creative **in Textile Art**

Julia Triston
Rachel Lombard



HOW TO BE CREATIVE IN TEXTILE ART

JULIA TRISTON RACHEL LOMBARD



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藏书章



BATSFORD



For Nick and Zoë and Tim – without your love, support, constant encouragement and understanding, this book would not have been possible. Thanks for being there. To the memory of Maud and Tim Tratt – inspirational, creative grandparents who always encouraged me to believe in myself.

Julia Triston

For all my family, near and far, you are a continuous source of joy and inspiration! To the memory of my beloved Dad, Sidney John Sutherland – this book would have made him proud.

Rachel Lombard

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Page 1: **Experimental Edges** (Ali Kent, Caroline Pinnington, Janice MacDougall, Julia Triston, Rachel Lombard) Hand and machine embroidery on various fabrics and papers to create edges for textile projects. Page 2: **Decorative Cuff** (Karine Richardson). Hand embroidery on hand-dyed fabrics. Page 3, top: **Three Covered Buttons** (Rachel Lombard). Machine and hand stitch on silk. Bottom: **Tutti Frutti Brooch** (Julia Triston). Hand stitch and buttons on a constructed background. Left: **Wrought sample** (Rachel Lombard) (see page 79). Right: **Shoes** (Pauline Twyman). Free machine embroidery and embellishments on base of moulded cotton wool paper.

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FOREWORD

We believe that everyone has the ability to develop work that expresses their individual creativity, although many people lack the confidence to interpret their ideas. By challenging existing ways of working and offering refreshing and accessible alternatives, *How to be Creative in Textile Art* will give you the tools to develop and enjoy the creativity that is innate in everyone.

While we can all be told how to do or make something, there is an exciting world beyond, based on your own ideas, your own sources, and your own references and preferences – things that are important and significant to you.

Beginning with your personal starting points, this book will guide and support you through the processes of creating a successful and rewarding piece of work – from selecting viable ideas and design development to completion and evaluation – enabling you to find your own creative solutions in the process of stitch and design.

Whether your projects are big or small, two- or three-dimensional, traditional or contemporary, *How to be Creative in Textile Art* will encourage you to ask questions and to examine different methods of exploring ideas for stitching, so that you can challenge yourself, develop your own individual style, discover innovative solutions, and pursue your chosen themes with confidence. Enjoy your unique creative journey and celebrate its expression through your own stitched textiles.



INTRODUCTION

How many times have you been to an exhibition and said to yourself, 'I wish I could do that!' or 'I wish I'd thought of that!'? This is a very common occurrence, and the first thing to bear in mind is that however experienced the artist may be, everyone has to start at the beginning for each new body of work. The second thing to consider is that art is a reflection of the person creating it and your artwork will be a reflection of you. Engaging with your creativity and making a start is the difficult bit, but as you have picked up this book, you are already committed to taking the first steps.

Many people approach their textile project with a finished item in mind. This is an 'end-loaded' approach. This book will encourage you to make a start on your textile project (from your chosen theme) and develop your ideas as you work until a resolution for your final piece evolves. This is a 'front-loaded' approach and we will demonstrate how, by following the procedures in this book, this will enable you to develop a more expressive and richer body of work.

How to be Creative in Textile Art sets out a framework to guide you step by step through the processes of exploring, developing, making and evaluating your own stitched-textile project, placing an emphasis on the creative personal journey itself, rather than focusing on the finished project. We live in a busy world and finding time to be creative can be a struggle. By breaking down a project into a series of manageable stages, the whole process will become more achievable and less daunting.

Your creative journey is not just about the physical making of your textile project. Spending time looking at and thinking about your work is a necessary part of the process too, and should never be underestimated – this reflective practice will enable you to harness your creativity constructively. So remember, next time you go to an exhibition: be inspired not intimidated – you can do it too!



Left: **Clutch bag** (Karine Richardson). Free machine embroidery, hand stitch and embellishments on pieced and dissolvable fabrics. Above: **Handmade tassel** (Janice MacDougall). Silk sari waste and wooden beads.



PART 1 : GATHERING

Chapter 1

WHERE TO START?

turning your ideas into a project

selecting a theme and setting your boundaries

the purpose of a sketchbook

Left: **Lace Book** (Julia Triston).
Exploration of lace patterns:
detail of overlapping cut,
shaped, printed and stitched
sketchbook pages.

This chapter is about taking your first steps towards being creative with textiles and stitch. It will lead you through the early stages of how to choose a personal theme for your work and how to start the process of working directly and confidently into a sketchbook. This will enable you to generate ideas that will feed into, and enrich, your textile work.

Turning your ideas into a project

Ideas need to be turned into reality, and to realize your textile project it is important to choose a theme or source that appeals to you and captures your imagination. This will make the creative process easier and more enjoyable.

Keeping a sketchbook will enable you to have a personal creative space where everything relevant to your project can be stored. In your sketchbook you can:

- gather information
- record
- evaluate
- order
- reference
- sketch
- stitch
- list and keep notes



Right: **Beauty Sketchbook** (Rachel Lombard). Explores how cosmetics are packaged and how the idea of beauty is presented. Opposite page: **Colour Sketchbook** (Julia Triston). Pages show design development work of overlaying colour on colour.

one step further



textured
hand made paper with leaves - painted
with Dekka silk paint stripes (+ pencil
(stabilotone) motifs over top when dried)



textured hand-made paper Dekka stripes +
stabilotone pencil spots + lines over surface



textured handmade fibre paper, as above
+ opposite but also with marbled, too.

Selecting a theme and setting your boundaries

Having a theme running through your sketchbook is essential to the development of an interesting and individual body of work. Setting yourself some boundaries will enable you to focus on what to include and what to leave out. Surprisingly, you can be more creative if you impose limitations on yourself and narrow your options down. The table below shows how you can select a broad theme, break it down to a more specific focus, then further refine it into smaller, more manageable elements.

THEME	FOCUS	ELEMENTS
architecture	Durham Cathedral	pillars archways weathered stone doorways door knockers stained-glass windows ecclesiastical vestments
	cityscapes	grids in high-rise blocks drain covers railings shop signs decorative tiles people reflections
nature	seaside	tidal marks and ripples ice cream and candy floss rockpools seaweed sand dunes flotsam and jetsam
	birds	feathers flight patterns nests eggs tracks
clothing	uniforms	braiding buttons pocket details headwear fastenings colours and textures badges

The purpose of a sketchbook

Starting a sketchbook is both scary and exciting. Being faced with blank sheet after blank sheet can be a daunting prospect for some people, but can offer an inviting freedom for others. Sketchbooks are a personal space, and can be an entirely private one, somewhere to consider possibilities, develop and investigate your options, and resolve your ideas through exploration and experimentation. You do not have to show your sketchbook to anyone else.

Choosing a sketchbook

There is a vast range of sketchbooks to choose from, so how do you know which one will be right for you? Here are some points to consider:

- the shape or format of the sketchbook – square, rectangular, portrait, landscape or defined (for example, leaf-shaped, heart-shaped). What is appealing to you? What is appropriate for your content?
- the size of the sketchbook. Remember that it is easier to transport smaller sketchbooks, but smaller pages can limit the size of your drawings or your insertions within the pages.
- the binding – a ring-bound sketchbook offers the possibility of easier page turning, but a ready-glued, perfect-bound pad is often much cheaper.
- the pages – thick pages or thin ones? Handmade and irregular paper, or smooth and consistent surfaces? White, cream, buff, black or coloured pages?
- cost – you do not have to buy a purpose-made sketchbook at all. You could make your own from lining paper, or from an old atlas, wallpaper sample books or recycled textbook pages.

Below: **Atlas Sketchbook** (Rachel Lombard). Made from a third of an old atlas's cover and torn pages. Hand and machine stitch with mother-of-pearl buttons.

