

The Alice Chair - Christian O'Reilly

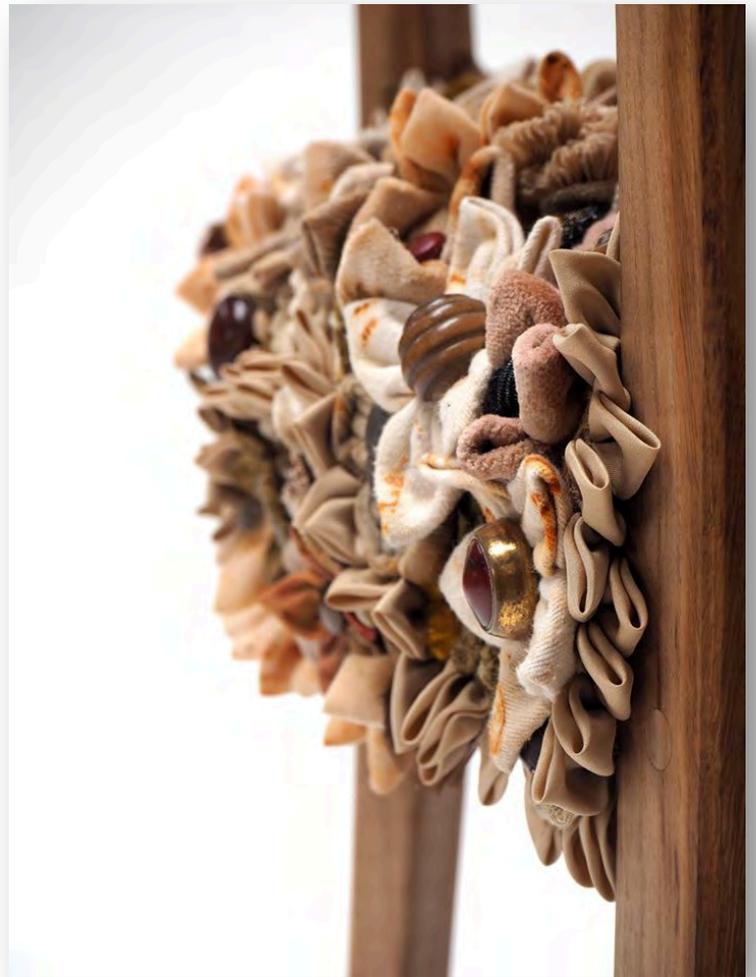
Textiles by Michelle Griffiths

Original Brief

To create a sculptural fabric cover in response to the natural colouration of the Sweet Chestnut wood as well as to the form of The Alice Chair.

To create a piece which appears to be "taken back" by nature.

To create a piece which functions fully as a chair as well as challenging the boundaries between the applied and fine arts.



Michelle Griffiths originally grew up in rural Wiltshire, moving to Cardiff in 1985 in order to study for a Classical Music Degree. She has lived and worked in Wales since that time. She received a scholarship from the Embroiderers Guild in 2001, which she used to further her textile studies in Japan and America. She has been an exhibiting member of Fibre Art Wales since 2001.

Her work draws on both traditional shibori (tie-dye) techniques in combination with plant dyes, and with new technologies, translating shibori patterns and textures into heat-set 3D reliefs or into laser-etched sculptural installations.

World Shibori Network and also the prestigious Lesley Craze Gallery (LCG), London have regularly represented her work, including the LCG exhibit at "Collect" with the Crafts Council, Saatchi Gallery in 2012.

Griffiths established "Resist Gallery/Studio" located in Model House Craft & Design Centre, in the beautiful and historic old town of Llantrisant in 2012. Work featured includes that of contemporary artists living and working in Wales as well as vintage Japanese textiles. Two apprentices worked with Michelle at the studio as part of a pilot Scheme with Creative Skillset Cymru (2013-14).

The Alice Chair – Materials

Cotton

Heavy weight calico - unbleached
Medium weight calico - unbleached
Light weight calico - unbleached
Cotton Diane
Brushed cotton – upcycled
Cotton scrim – unbleached
Commercially printed cotton quilting fabrics - overdyed
Commercially printed cotton lawns by Liberty - overdyed
Cotton muslin squares
Cotton polyester sheeting
Cotton velvet

Silk

Silk/Viscose Devore Velvet
Habotai silk – heavy weight
Habotai silk – medium weight
Habotai silk – vintage – lightweight
Vintage Japanese silk – sourced from unused kimono bolt (Tan)
Vintage Japanese Chirimen Crepe Silk from vintage kimonos (overdyed)
Silk Organza
Silk Georgette
Silk Noil - natural
Commercially embroidered Dupion Silk
Tussah Silk
Silk satin/Bamboo - natural

Linen

Linen Scrim – bleached
Linen Scrim – natural
Linen – Red Edge medium weight natural
Linen – open weave designed for blackwork embroidery

Wool

Wool/viscose felt – bleached
Heavy weight plain weave wool - natural



Buttons

The vast majority of buttons for this project have been sourced from a myriad of vintage/antique textile and button specialists. Some contemporary buttons or reproduction buttons have also been used where appropriate. The buttons are produced from a wide variety of materials including wood, metal, mother of pearl, leather, Bakelite. Some of the buttons were selected to represent Sweet Chestnuts in reference to the wood used to create the chair. Other buttons were selected for their interesting history and original use to hold scent, or for their reference to natural plant forms. Vintage wood, leather and metal buttons were selected for their sympathetic patina.



Dyes/Processes

Dye materials

Sweet chestnut wood shavings/sawdust
from the production of The Alice Chair

Brown Onion Skins

Red Onion Skins

Bramble – chopped leaves and stalks

Coffee – instant

Dandelions – all parts of plants, but
primarily the flowers

Strawberries and Raspberries – from
frozen fruit and commercial coulis

Turmeric - ground

Madder root – ground

Cold water fibre reactive dyes on a
limited number of fabrics – all of which
were over dyed with natural dyes in
order to make them harmonious to the
natural palette selected.

Mordants

Alum. A non-toxic mineral salt used to
soak the fabrics prior to dyeing.

This acts as a bridge between the fabric
and the dyes producing brighter and
more light-fast colours. Alum was not
used with all batches of fabric for this
project so as to create variation in tone.



Fabric Manipulation

"Mokume" (wood grain)

Shibori pattern (tie dye) produced by hand stitching and gathering the fabric prior to dyeing in order to create a dyed pattern on the cloth.



"Mokume" (wood grain)

Shibori texture (tie dye) produced by hand stitching and gathering the fabric after the dyeing processes has been completed, giving an appearance similar to pleated or smocked fabrics.

"Suffolk Puffs/Yo-yo's"

A technique used widely in conjunction with patchwork and quilting. Circles of fabric are stitched and gathered.



Ageing/Distressing Fabrics

Many of the fabrics have been aged and distressed using a combination of techniques such as tearing, fraying, sanding, rusting, prolonged soaking in water or iron water.



Kanzashi Flowers

A form of fabric origami (folding and stitching cut fabrics) that produces petal and flower forms. These were used to decorate the traditional Japanese hairstyles.

