

EXHIBITION NEWS:

Off the Surface - exhibition captures a passion for embroidery

Saturday 20 May – Sunday 9 July

*A collaboration between the Devon Guild of Craftsmen
and The Royal School of Needlework (RSN), London*

At Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9AF

A new textile exhibition at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen showcases contemporary, hand embroidered work

inspired by treasures from the past. It draws upon a world-renowned collection of 2,500 unique and priceless embroidery pieces, held at the Royal School of Needlework at Hampton Court. The Collection also includes 60,000 designs, photographs and documents which detail and capture our passion for embroidery across time. The School's second year degree students have made new work to sit alongside rarely seen archival objects, such as Victorian collars, handkerchiefs, antique purses and Chinese embroidery.

Steeped in history and with unrivalled expertise in hand embroidery techniques, the [Royal School of Needlework](#) students have taken this captivating, traditional craft and made it relevant today. *Off the Surface* presents a breathtaking array of garments, cushions, decorative hangings and adornments. Their stitched work shows how they've looked back to traditional sewing methods found in the archives, but interpreted them in new and experimental ways. Influences range from haute couture and interior design - to avant garde and abstract. Beth Cole, who has embroidered Swarovski crystal beads for Hussein Chalayan at Paris Fashion Week, has produced a sculptural fashion garment from knotted macramé. Others have changed the scale of stitching, such as Abigail Frusher's bamboo-wrapped threads inspired by the reverse side of a silk embroidered Japanese sash. Nina Brabbins' densely textured contemporary 'purse-pots' are formed from raised threads of woven metal and hemp. Plastic medical pipettes, sequins, leather, feathers, pins, paint, portraits and even pasta, take the stage in the final pieces on show.

The School's degree in *Hand Embroidery for Fashion, Interiors, Textile Art* is a full time, specialist course. Students' immersion in contemporary and traditional embroidery practices will often lead to work placements or commissions for fashion houses such as Burberry (Ariane Hall) or Alexander McQueen (Alex Standring). Their innovations in hand-stitching mean students' work is sought after by galleries such as The New Craftsmen (London) and now, excitingly the Devon Guild, which aims to promote new ideas and approaches to craft and design. *'A show of more unusually textured or 3-D hand stitching should prove inspiring and popular to visitors'*, says curator Saffron Wynne, who's noted a renaissance in needlecraft: knitting and stitching groups, a return to DIY or recycled fashion and sewing activities for well-being. A recent Observer article also reports: *'The new wave of stitchers are benefiting from a form of crafty mindfulness in an increasingly pressurised, yet passive world.'** This new exhibition not only lifts threads and fabrics 'Off the Surface' but should raise your spirits too.

Exhibition is open daily, 10am-5.30pm. Free entry.

Related events: Friday 18 May: [Preview Event](#) with refreshments and dining. (01626 831959) / 20 May: [Curator's Tour](#) / 24 June: [Workshop](#) introducing a range of stump work and applique techniques / 29 June: [Talk' The Story of Colour in Textiles'](#) by Chief Executive of the RSN, Dr. Susan Kay-Williams. [More...](#) BOOK 01626 832223

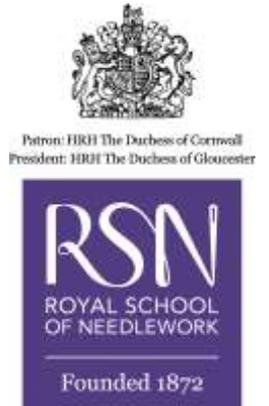


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Devon Guild of Craftsmen in Bovey Tracey is the most popular contemporary crafts venue and charity in the South West (100,000+ visitors annually) and the hub of local and creative communities. Exhibitions and events are fun, free, and open to all. They run an educational programme for schools and local groups as well as running two galleries and a shop with an exciting range of constantly changing craft displays. There's a lively, friendly café with a rooftop terrace, alongside the River Bovey. The Devon Guild is involved in two popular annual festivals that have helped put Bovey Tracey on the map: **The**

Contemporary Craft Festival in June and **Nourish Festival** of food, music and craft every September.

The Royal School of Needlework (RSN) based at the magnificent Hampton Court Palace in south west London is the international centre of excellence for the art of hand embroidery. With a thriving education programme, the RSN offers a range of courses for beginners through to advanced.



Images: Royal School of Needlework second year Degree students' work including Nina Brabbins woven purse; Abigail Frusher bamboo threads; Alex Standing pipette collar; Elizabeth Lowe embroidered flowers

* *Guardian* quote of *Observer* article here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/apr/29/stitch-in-time-saves-stress-sewing-knitting>

