

Out of the Box

September 2007 Newsletter

About Us (Mission Statement)

The Out of the Box Fibre Art Group is a cooperative association of artists who are passionate about creating innovative, thought-provoking works of art, and promoting fibre art through exhibitions, education and professional development.

Our membership includes machine and/or hand embroiderers, art quilters, weavers, felters, doll makers, silk painters, appraisers, dyers as well as other needle workers and mixed media and fine artists. Since we are a co-op organisation, we place strong emphasis on activities that support active participation of the membership in the continuing artistic development of all. Our focus in meetings is on sharing art techniques, design ideas, artistic processes and inspiration, as well as our thoughts on the business and critiquing of our art. We come from all walks of life, but are drawn together by our love for texture, colour, and creation in an atmosphere of mutual support and camaraderie.

We meet once a month to share ideas, techniques and inspiration, and from time to time hold open fibre art workshops.

Membership

Membership requires active participation. Our yearly membership fee is \$20.00. Please contact Mary Pal for more information about joining our group. For more details, visit us at www.out-of-the-box.org

Meetings

Meetings are held the third Monday of the month, from 7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at the **Ottawa Citizen Main Floor Board Room, Baxter Road, Ottawa.**

Planning Committee Positions:

Have you considered taking on a position on the Out of the Box Planning Committee for the 2007/2008 membership year? Please contact Meredith Filshie if you are interested in any of the positions. Positions available are listed at right under the "Contacts" heading.

Submission Deadline for the September newsletter is October 5, 2007 (or whatever date the new Newsletter Editor sets.

Contacts

Convenor	Neera Huckvale	huckvale@istar.ca
Programs	Joanne Batchelor	joanne.batchelor@sympatico.ca programs@out-of-the-box.org
Secretary	Pat Caffery	caffery@magma.ca
Membership	Mary Pal	marybpal@gmail.com
Treasurer	Meridith Filshie	mfilshie@rogers.com
Web	Cynthia Sanoy	csanoy@rogers.com
Newsletter	Elaine Quehl	EQuehl@hotmail.com newsletter@out-of-the-box.org
Library	Joan Harrison	celloquilter@sympatico.ca
Publicity/Marketing	Karen Goetzinger	quiltopia@sympatico.ca

Dates of Meetings with Program Topics

2007	
August 20	Garage Sale
September 17	Margaret Vant Erve – Portfolio Preparation
October 15	Dale Smith – Panel Discussion?
November 19	Heather Dubreuil - Trunk Show
December 17	Elissa Wright – Printmaking Demo
2008	
January 21	
February 18	
March 17	
April 21	
May 19	
June 16	
July 21 or 28?	
August 18	
September 15	
October 20	
November 17	
December 15	

Out of the Box

September 2007 Newsletter

September Program and Agenda:

1. Show and Tell
2. Program: Margaret Vant Erve – Portfolio Presentation

Margaret is a Canadian artist who depicts rural and woodland landscapes, wildlife and botanical studies in her works. She paints with thread by using a variety of textile paint mediums and crayons to paint her fabrics prior to applying hand and machine embroidery. For more information about Margaret, visit her website at <http://www.cyberus.ca/~vanterve/>

3. Business
 - a) Planning Committee Positions
 - b) Other Business

Membership Renewal

Membership renewal forms were distributed by email. The form attached to the email should be printed and completed and returned by snail mail or brought to the September meeting.

Please note that membership renewal is complete only when payment has been made. **Renewal deadline is Sept. 30, 2007**, after which we will accept new members from the waiting list.

Please feel free to email or call (226-1854) if you have any questions or concerns.

Joanne Batchelor
25 Parkglan Drive,
Nepean, Ontario K2G 3G7
Membership Coordinator

Treasurer's Report:

Submitted by Meredith Filshie

The following gives an overview of the finances since August 1, 2006. The opening balance was \$927.02. Income to Aug 31, 2007 was \$1182.10 and disbursements were \$1223.94. Note that memberships paid for in August have not yet been deposited as Joanne (Membership Coordinator) and I have not met since then. Disbursements have been the following:

Mississippi Valley Textile Museum Show Expenses:

\$460.08 (of which \$143.10 was reimbursed)

Bank Service Charges	51.35
Web Hosting	78.00
Ontario Crafts Council	132.50
Margaret Vant Erve	175.00

Idiom Quilt Entry	25.00
Ray Pilon	150.00
Montreal Show	77.00
Arts Ottawa East Membership	75.00

Balance as of Aug. 31, 2007 is \$885.18.

Black and White Challenge

Submitted by Elena Keen

This is a reminder that kits will be available on September 17th for the Black and White challenge. If you want one of these kits please email me asap since there will be a limited number. We have 23 names as of today, with 10 kits paid for. We hope to have no more than 24 kits, but if there is enough interest, we may be able to make up a few more. Challenge rules will be included in the kits.

News from our Members

Pat Caffery

One of Pat's works of art has been accepted into the Talisman Beadworks juried show, "And Now For Something Different Part II" in Toronto from Oct 9 - 24, 2007. The show will be at the Its Not a Deli Gallery on Queen Street.

Karen Goetzinger

Nocturne
Centrepointe Theatre Gallery
Ben Franklin Place
101 Centrepointe Dr.
August 31 – October 3, 2007
Opening Reception: Sunday, September 9, 2007, 2 to 4 p.m.

Karen Goetzinger, Carmella Karijo Rother, Wendy Feldberg

Mississippi Valley Textile Museum
Almonte, Ontario
July 31-October 28, 2007

Kit Vincent

Two Studios: The Work of Paul and Kit Vincent
September 12 – 23, 2007
Sandra Whitton Gallery
253 Princess St., 2nd Floor
Kingston, Ontario
www.sandrawhitton.com

Out of the Box

September 2007 Newsletter

Special thanks to Sharon Dawn Johnson for providing this month's book review.

BOOK REVIEW

by Sharon Dawn Johnson

Sirna, Gail Carolyn 2006 *In Praise of the Needlewoman: Embroiderers, Knitters, Lacemakers and Weavers in Art*. New York: Merrell. ISBN 1 85894 341 8

Each of the 87 pictures reproduced in this beautiful book has a stitching story to tell. Gail Sirna has done considerable research to pull together a fascinating collection of (mostly) women practicing the needlearts in one form or another. The reproductions are generously sized, with picture and accompanying text sharing facing pages. Some description of each painting, and often a context-situating remark, helps readers/viewers to look closely at the contents of each scene portrayed. From settings austere to sumptuous, with the handwork either central or incidental to the scene, there is much material here for reflection on the place of needlework in the lives of women and the place of women in their larger social settings.

Having read through the book in two sessions, I was struck by the social commentary that these pages evoke when taken as a whole. Though there are a number of female painters included like Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, and other lesser-known women, the majority of the works shown here are those done by men. Sirna touches on the way in which stitching women provide viewers with a deeper visual commentary on the socially-accepted roles and activities proscribed for women over the centuries. This collection, therefore, provides a fascinating and sometimes troubling insight into the way in which stitching in its various forms was used to express industriousness and submissiveness to a male-dominated ideal of womanhood.

But one of many examples that Sirna comments on, albeit briefly, is a painting entitled *In the Nursery* by Mary Fairchild MacMonnies, who was an Impressionist artist living at Giverny under the tutelage of Claude Monet. The scene shows Mary and her maid/nanny stitching in a well-lighted space with ceiling windows, (a studio?) while a child gazes out at viewers from a highchair. Sirna writes: "Although comfortably upper-middle class, and not overly burdened with the daily household tasks associated with women, Mary MacMonnies was nevertheless restricted in her freedom, and still required

to be a needlewoman, even though she had many other creative outlets" (p.135).

This representative comment on social expectations and restrictions repeatedly caught my attention for the contrast it provides with the contemporary practice of the needlearts. Whatever the struggles of being a textile artist these days, we no longer have to contend with the social *expectation* that stitching is one of the very few ways in which women can portray their wide-ranging abilities, intelligence, and spirit. One of my favourite pictures in this collection is by Pre-Raphaelite painter John William Waterhouse. Entitled "*I am Half Sick of Shadows,*" said the Lady of *Shalot* (1916), it shows a red-gowned woman full of ennui as she gazes in the mirror reflecting the world beyond her window, as the story comes to us in Tennyson's famous poem. It is the moment just before she flees the confines that will actually lead to her destruction. Sirna comments briefly on the social imprisonment of Victorian women as it's implicitly conveyed in this picture. It was death for a woman to break with the conventions of her day. In that respect, I find this picture representative of that general need to flee various types of confining stereotypes.

My most favoured picture, entitled *Mariana* (1851) by John Everett Millais, is based on another of Tennyson's poems of the same name. Here we see a blue-gowned woman standing in front of her needlework, weary and stretching in a state of ennui and erotic tension while eternally waiting for a lover who never comes. In this case, the picture, more than one half century earlier than *The Lady of Shalot*, nevertheless shows a woman chafing, both at the restrictions of her life and the supposed consolations that stitching was meant to provide. Although we wouldn't identify stitching with social repression these days, there is no doubt that stitching still continues to provide solace and consolation to many of us, as well as artistic challenges and intellectual stimulation. How many of us know that our forms of stitching do really compensate us for other areas of our lives that are less than ideal?

My one frustration with this book is the brevity of the descriptions that would give a more art-historical context for these paintings. I longed to know a lot more than the brief tidbits that were offered. But I realize that this tip of the iceberg gives me the opportunity to do more of my own research. All told, *In Praise of the Needlewoman* is well worth the looking and reading for its presentation as much as for the questions it raises yet leaves unanswered.

Out of the Box

September 2007 Newsletter

Events

Fabric Flea Market

Sat 13 Oct 2007
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Glebe Community Centre
175 Third Avenue Ottawa
Admission 2.00\$ to support Cambridge Street public School
- book a table or donations accepted
Contact - Jane at 819.595.0886 or
kayjyoung@magma.ca

The Hudson and Area Studio Tour

Featuring 18 artists and artisans, September 29 and 30, 2007, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Website: www.studiotourhudsonandregion.org
Heather Dubreuil will have brochures to distribute at the August and September meetings.

Irregular Migrations

Featuring the work of Karen McRae
August 31 – October 14, 2007
Irene's Pub
885 Bank St. Ottawa
www.irenespub.ca

Workshops

Workshops with out of town artists

The Art Quilter Lecture and Workshop Series by Bravo Quilt Studio

Please contact Jody Taylor at bravoshow@sympatico.ca to register for these workshops.

Layered Curves and Peaks I & II

with:
Karen Eckmeier—
September 28, 2007 (lecture)
September 29 & 30, 2007 (workshop)
<http://quilted-lizard.com/>

Crazy about Curves

with:
Vikki Pignatelli —
October 26, 2007 (lecture)

October 27 & 28, 2007 (workshop)
<http://home.att.net/~vikkipm/>

Free Expression Buffet

with:
Robbi Joy Eklow
"the goddess of the last minute" —
November 30, 2007 (lecture)
December 1 & 2, 2007 (workshop)
www.robbieklow.com

Shops and Suppliers

Submitted by Heather Dubreuil

"Wooden Apples" (Montreal) is a new boutique/gallery/studio recently profiled by local CBC radio. It is located in a lively, multi-ethnic neighbourhood called Mile End, filled with restaurants and independent shops. Wooden Apples is owned and managed by Amy Johnson, a woman in her twenties originally from Ottawa, though she has spent most of her life in Vancouver. The concept behind the place is very exciting. It is aimed at a new generation of people who are coming through non-traditional paths to an appreciation of hand-crafted wearables and home decor items. Amy's boutique features silk-screened linens (hand towels, totes, aprons) and hand-made clothing and jewellery, as well as embroidery threads and hand-dyed yarns for those wishing to embark on their own adventure of making and embellishing wearables. She also offers workshops on such topics as patchwork and understanding the mysteries of the sewing machine. Every month, a different fibre artist exhibits their work on one wall of the shop. Amy has a workroom off to the side where she is free to pursue her own projects when she's not busy running the shop.

There is not a lot of inventory in the boutique right now, though what is there is well-displayed. This is not the place for those of us looking for a wide variety of interesting materials, as I'm sure we all have our favourite sources. But, given that fibre arts has such a tenuous place in the Montreal landscape, this is at least a starting point for what may promise to be a whole new generation of participation in fibre arts. Amy is keen to promote connections between various interest groups in Montreal. She is located at 5319 Park Avenue, between Fairmount and St.-Viateur. Phone 514-315-8912. The website, still under construction, is www.atelierwoodenapples.com. Amy

Out of the Box

September 2007 Newsletter

may be e-mailed at woodenapples@hotmail.com. Store hours are Tuesday and Wednesday 12 - 6, Thursday through Sunday 10 - 6.

Not too far away is "**Au Papier Japonnais**" at 21 Fairmount West (phone 514-276-6863). It is listed as one of three "major partners" of The Japanese Paper Place (the other two being in Vancouver and Toronto) and offers more than 500 kinds of Japanese paper in its shop, as well as frequent English workshops on various techniques, like paper quilting and collage. Visit their website at www.aupapierjaponais.com

Minutes of the Out of the Box Meeting of August 20, 2007

The August meeting featured a garage sale, so no minutes were recorded.

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