

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 organization, 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.

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.**

Contacts (apologies if any of the following is inaccurate)

PC Convenor	Joan Harrison Elizabeth Piccolo	celloquilter@sympatico.ca yksolutions@yahoo.ca
Convenor	Rotates	
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Submission Deadline for the October Newsletter is January 9, 2008.

Dates of Meetings with Program Topics

Check the web site for the most up-to-date information

2008	Role	
Dec 15	Convener	(Karen Samanski)
	Main Event	Mary Spicer from Patrick Gordon Framing
	Show & Tell	Jo-Ann Zorzi
Jan 10	Convener ??	
	Main Event	Linda Palaisy: Improving your creativity by getting the most out of your sewing machine
	Show & Tell	
Feb 16	Main Event	Valentine Theme See write-up later in the newsletter
Mar 16	Convener ??	Roth McDowell show and tell: 7 participants from OOTB will show the work that resulted from taking Ruth's class
	Show & Tell	Empty
Apr 20	Convener ??	Adele Sciortino: Doll making and fibre manipulation – more details to come
	Show & Tell	Empty
May 18	Convener ??	Wabi Sabi: Fibres, classes, dyeing spaces. Wabi Sabi is a new wool shop on Wellington Street
	Show & Tell	Empty
Jun 15	Convener ??	Lianna van der Bellen: Japanese Art
	Show & Tell	Empty
Jul 20	Convener ??	A Teacher from Algonquin's Summer School of the Arts
	Show & Tell	Empty
Aug 17	Joanne Batchelor	Annual garage sale and social at Maki House
Sept 21		
Oct 19		
Nov 16		
Dec 21		

Really Bad Weather & Meetings

If there is any weather condition that makes travel risky, members will be notified by e-mail by 4:00 pm the afternoon of the meeting. If you do not have email or cannot access email at work, please partner with someone who has access. Members should NOT call the Citizen for this information as nobody there would have it. (They lend the facility to organizations free of charge and do not want any involvement in administrative matters).

December 15th Meeting

The December speaker will be Mary Spicer from Patrick Gordon Framing. Mary has over 20 years of experience in professional picture framing. Her website is at www.madmother.ca.

Mary will talk about:

- common "enemies" of textiles
- how to protect (if possible) from those enemies
- preventing damage during framing or storage; or, preserving work by proper handling and storage
- cleaning
- mounting methods/display techniques for various textile works, from needlework to silk fabrics to heavily beaded works or tapestries
- considerations to make when framing; things you can do to make mounting and framing easier; and safer heirloom vs. contemporary textile concerns

Mary is going to try to bring some samples to the presentation. She currently has some heirloom pieces and is going to see if she can get some partly framed or mounted pieces from Patrick Gordon Framing where she works.

Mary would be willing to offer advice on mounting / framing a few examples of members' work. She is interested in staying for the evening, so rather than have a show and tell session, perhaps members could ask Mary for her advice on framing / mounting their work that they have brought to the meeting.

Heather Dubreuil has also kindly agreed to show how she mounts / frames her work.

February 16th Meeting

Inspiration word for February's OOTB Challenge: Heart

You are invited to create fibre art using any media, size and shape you want that is inspired by the word "heart". Feel free to interpret "heart" as broadly as you like. You could be inspired to use it as part of a love and heart theme or use the lyrics of a song or poem with this word to inspire your creations. Or you could go in other directions – heartbreak, heart and soul, follow your heart, young at heart, etc. Go "heartfully" into this challenge! Bring your finished (finished whenever in the past) or barely started project to the February 16th meeting. Be prepared to explain your sources of inspiration, your techniques and your interpretation of your piece. There will be prizes and encouragement for all.

Congratulations

Congratulations to member Margaret Dunsmore, whose article "Winter Robins" was published in the January 2009 issue of American Quilter. The article gives a complete pattern and instructions for a charming patchwork-and-appliqué project. (submitted by Heather Dubreuil)

Announcements

From Meredith Filshie – I will be bringing some small metal pendants to the December meeting to give away. Most have possibilities as embellishments. A jewellery manufacturer which has been in business since the 1920's is closing and had these "lying around". He would be happy if they found a good home.

Book Reviews:

"A Whole New Mind", by Daniel H. Pink

Reviewed by Heather Dubreuil

We artists should take some comfort in the subtitle of this book, "Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future". Daniel Pink argues that just as society has progressed from the Agricultural Age to the Industrial Age to the Information Age, we are now moving into the Conceptual Age, when thinking directed by the right side of the brain will become more and more valued. Asia, Abundance and Automation are the forces moving us into the Conceptual Age. Ten years ago, parents encouraged their kids to enter the fields of accounting and computer programming. Soon, thanks to the outsourcing of left-brain-directed work to Asia, graduates of liberal arts and fine arts will have the edge over MBA's. When routine number-crunching, legal research and even the reading of x-rays can be accomplished more economically in Bangalore, business looks to hire those who can bring creativity to the workplace. Who can tell the story of our business's product to the consumer? Who can listen empathetically to the client? Who can make the connections, see the big picture? Who can develop our brand? Who can design the product with that special feature that will set it above the others?

The second half of Pink's book focuses on the six right-brain skills that will make the difference, and how to cultivate them: design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning. Artists employ these processes in the making of their work, of course. We can only hope that the market for art will expand, as consumers search for the unique, for meaning, and for good design in their own lives.

For a one-minute outline of Pink's main ideas, have a look at www.youtube.com/watch?v=syo6ecgcIR0

Radical Lace and Subversive Crochet

by Jean Gerster

Keene Valley, New York resident and Fibre Artist [Jerilea Zempel](#), known for her public art projects which take a humorous and for some, a provocative approach to subjects such as violence, war and the environment, made it onto the comedy news show, the *Colbert Report* last week, as part of a skit called [America's Fragile Borders](#). Her art, part social satire, part political activism, challenges viewers to reflect on the meaning of traditional historical monuments, as well as our use of everything from guns to gas guzzlers. Her work includes a piece she installed outside a Polish Military museum in 1995 called [Guns and Rosettes](#) in which she shrouded a Soviet tank with what appears to be an enormous pink doily. The Colbert piece, a spoof on American Homeland Security, chronicles Zempel's experience this past summer. She was returning home to the U.S. from Canada when she was detained by U.S. customs agents at the border after drawings in her artist sketchbook, showing an SUV adorned in a lacy white coverlet, a piece she now calls [Homeland Security Blanket](#), caused the customs agent to suspect her of being an industrial spy. The upstate New York newspaper *The Press Republican* recently reported the details in this article, "[Keene artist had a hard time getting back into the U.S.](#)".

Course Announcement

From Margaret Vant Erve – I am teaching at the Embroiderers' Association of Canada Seminar, held in Kingston, Ontario from May 19 to 24, 2009. The class is titled 'Seeking Inspiration'. I've included the description below and attached the student letter, which fully describes what this class is about. If you think you might be interested, you can go to the seminar web-site at www.eac.ca/Seminar/2009/2009homepage.htm. Seminar is a lot of fun. There are many activities other than the workshops. Please pass this along to anyone you think might be interested.

Description: Seeking Inspiration by Margaret Vant Erve

All artists find inspiration from other artists. This inspiration can come from many sources and time periods: It can range from colour use, to graphic design, to the atmosphere conveyed. In this class, you will bring in images by some of your favourite artists who inspire you. With your head full of ideas and lots of photographs or other design material to help you, Margaret will assist you through the design process and discernment of which techniques would interpret your design. Your inspiration

can be derived from any style of art that you like, from abstract to realism. Students may work with fabric paints, collage and hand or machine embroidery. Some drawing abilities and basic knowledge of surface embroidery is essential.

Student Letter: Dear Student, Seminar is a long way off but it's not too early to begin thinking about ideas for this class. Those of you familiar with my classes or my work will know that this course is a bit of a departure from what I usually teach. My objective in teaching is always to help the student explore their own ideas, images and push themselves just a bit more than usual in the creative arena. This class is for those who are not intimidated to explore new ideas, who want to create something different and are willing to try new techniques, new imagery and explore different ways of expressing an idea.

In the promotional material I suggest that all artists find inspiration from other artists. Let me offer you some examples. The impressionist painters were inspired by Japanese art prints: they liked the graphic quality, the unconventional and asymmetrical compositions of the designs. Picasso was inspired by African and Oceanic tribal masks in his cubist period. Klimt found inspiration in the beautiful mosaics of Venice and Ravenna, from Byzantine art, Mycenaean metalwork, Persian rugs and miniatures to create his wonderfully decorative portraits filled with pattern and gold leaf. Our own Group of Seven were inspired by the Post-Impressionists, such as Van Gogh and Cézanne, applying bold strokes of colour to interpret the Canadian landscape. All these artists created wonderful new images that were inspired by other artists and artisans of many different time periods.

What I would like you to do, is find out what you like. It can be from many different sources. Here are some possibilities: a favourite painter, a children's book illustrator, jewellery from a certain period of time, a particular style of art such as art deco, ceramic tiles, tapestry, native art, masks. There are many possibilities. Don't leave this task to a week before seminar. Please come in prepared. Your experience will be much more enjoyable. From your sources, we will work together to generate ideas and images. We will have group discussions on the ideas that develop so you have feedback. This is also an opportunity to experiment with some other techniques. Although I personally work in paint, machine and surface embroidery, I do not restrict you to those techniques. You can use your medium of choice. For example, if you love counted work, then create a design with this in

mind. If quilting is your love, then work in that technique. The primary function of this class is to learn to find inspiration from whichever arts and/or crafts that you love.

To give an example, suppose I loved Klimt's art work of 'The Kiss'. The first thing I would ask is what is it about this piece that I love so much. Is it the emotions that it evokes. Is it all the gold or the bold patterns. Perhaps it the abstract composition in contrast to the detailed and more realistic faces. Maybe I like the energy it generates. It could be all of the above. In reading more about the piece I learn about Klimt's influences and the message he wanted to convey. If I wanted to be directly inspired by this singular piece, then I might bring in several photographs of people, and probably in very different poses but they might still have the intimacy that is such a big part of 'The Kiss'. I might bring in pattern books because I like all the patterns he created in his work. I might think about painting some of my own fabrics or applying some applique. Perhaps it is all the gold that appeals to me so I might bring in some foil. I also might bring some landscape images that could be used as a reference for a backdrop. I might also bring in some art deco and art nouveau references because of the similar time period. The more references I bring, the easier it will be for me to conceive of my design. I want to create my own image in fibre, so I'll be thinking of the vast possibilities and the limitations of my technique and my abilities while I am designing.

I hope this provides you with some insight into what this class will be about. I encourage you to go on-line and google the following fibre artists. Each of them write about their sources of inspiration. Perhaps you will find it helpful.

Renie Breskin Adams: <http://www.reniebee.com/>

Renee Harris: <http://reneeharris.net/>

Audrey Walker:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/textiles/features/embroidery/Embroiderers/audrey_walker/index.html

If you are interested in seeing some illustrators who work in fabric and embroidery check out Belinda Downes and Rachel Griffin.

There are a lot of exciting things happening in the embroidery world. Why not be a part of it.

Some of the techniques you will learn is working with silk paints and resist, transparent and opaque fabric paints and crayons to create painted backgrounds or specific fabrics for your piece. I will also help you with any surface embroidery techniques, applique and machine embroidery. I have knowledge of counted techniques also but hope that

you also bring in your own expertise in this area should you choose to work in it.

Don't expect to go away with half a piece finished. What you can hope for though is a well thought out design and lots of experiments that will lead you to creating a great work. Some of you will have simpler ideas than other so may progress quicker. If your drawing skills are minimal, then don't use Rembrandt as your inspiration source (actually don't use Rembrandt at all - I wouldn't know how to help you).

I look forward to working together with you. If you have questions, please e-mail or call me.

Regards,
Margaret Vant Erve
613-230-7850