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Words of Wisdom

"I can always be distracted by love, but eventually I get horny for my creativity" – Gilda Radner

Program Lineup 2023- 2024

Playdate on Bookmaking – date tbd

February 19 meeting – Fibre Fling Info (Zoom Only)

March 18 meeting – Film Night

April 15 meeting – Favourite Tools

May 3-4 - Fibre Fling

May 20 meeting – Guest Speaker – Alice Vander Vennen

May 21 - Workshop with Alice Vander Vennen

June 17 meeting – Book Arts, Presentation by Wendy Feldberg

July 15 meeting – Giveaway night, plus an activity

August 19 meeting – A possible field trip

News from Wendo and Sandy

February meeting will be on Zoom and the link will be sent out on Sunday. We are gearing up for Fibre Fling and Sally will be presenting all the ins and outs. Sandy will give a demo on the basic uses of the app Canva. How to make a square post and resize images.

The Piece by Piece challenge has been taken up by 16 people and work is underway to create this beautiful landscape.

The Banner Renewal committee has four people on it, and more are welcome. The more minds we have inputting their creative ideas, the more out of the box these banners will be.

We would like to update the website with information on where all the things that the group owns are living. Please let us know if you are storing anything. Co-chair@out-of-the-box.org

We will be sending out two google forms asking for your ideas on program, playdates and workshops. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Spotlight on new OOTB member: Stitchery master Ruth Mills

by Erin Scullion



Ruth Mills stutters when she tries to refer to herself as an "artist." But a quick look around her house and workshop and you think, "Are you kidding me?"

Her stitchery art is everywhere. They include abstracts, intricate spider webs, delicate flowers stitched with special lace from a closing convent in Baie St. Paul (she was one of a group of nine stitchers invited to create works from the material); stitching of an apple still-life that looks like a painting. And oh, there is a watercolor painting she's finished, a new art form for this talented artist.



And then there's her list of credentials:

- Bachelor of Science in Clothing and Textiles University of Alberta
- Studied Museum Technology, Algonquin College
- Former instructor Fashion Design Program, Algonquin College
- Twenty-two years at Parks Canada researching textiles and making historical reproduction costumes and accessories.
- Ten years at National Defence as Technical Authority of Badges & Insignia

And did we mention her milliner skills and business? "They changed my job at Parks Canada into something

I did not want to do in 1998, so I quit and decided to make hats full-time," she says.

It maybe seemed a little foolhardy at the time, she adds. But she made a living from it for over two decades.



"I guess I mentally feel more like a technical artist than an 'artist artist,' she says. She "retired" in 2020 and then applied to, and was accepted by, the Royal School of Needlework in London, England to start a certificate in Hand Embroidery. COVID put an end to that trip (though she still takes short courses from them).

So how did she come to OOTB? "Well, it had been a while since I had belonged to an association, or a guild and I was missing the comradery of fellow makers. And then I was in Canada Beading Supply one day when I overheard Meredith (Filshie, OOTB member and store owner) talking to another customer about the organization."

The rest, she says, is history.

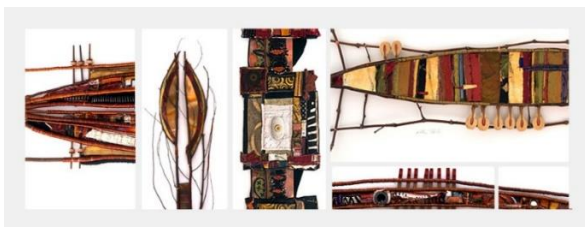
"Meredith invited me to a meeting and when I arrived, I felt I was welcomed into a big circle of friendly faces with open arms. I was hooked!"

And that's how this self-effacing **artist** (Ruth, take note!) came to become one of the latest members of OOTB.

Welcome, Ruth!

Alice Vander Vennan Workshop - reminder

Check out Alice Vander Vennen's interesting art: alicevandervennen.ca and think about registering for the Tuesday, May 21st workshop **Nature Narratives** at Kitchissippi United Church. Details were in a January 15th email from Meredith Filshie.



[Click here to view available work](#)

You can contact Alice Vander Vennen at:

165 Burke Street

Cobourg, ON

K9A 2K7

(905) 372-9319

(905) 372-3680 (fax)

alice@alicevandervennen.ca

All supplies will be provided and you should be able to take home a beautiful framed 10"x10" finished piece. The cost is \$85.00 payable upon registration.

Confirm your interest with Meredith Filshie: mfilshie@rogers.com by April 21st, 2024. Send a cheque or do an e-transfer to Marilyn White. Her address for a cheque made payable to Out of the Box is #1804, 200 Rideau Street, Ottawa, ON K1N5Y1. For an e-transfer to Marilyn: financial.ootb@gmail.com. If you have any questions about etransfers, use the same address.

Your registration will only be guaranteed once Marilyn has received payment.

Mystery Twists in Textile Podcast

by Sharon Dawn Johnson

Haptic and Hue, a podcast filled with fascinating episodes about textiles and what they tell us about ourselves, has immeasurably widened my textile horizons. The skillful research, interviews, and storytelling presented by Jo Andrews, a hand weaver, are rich in unusual details and viewpoints. Richer still are the meanings embedded in the textile stories that unfold in each episode.

Read on to discover the special reason for drawing your particular attention to Episode #26, Canada's Forgotten Quilts.

This poignant story focuses on the forgotten women and children who stitched more than 5 million 'comfort' items sent from Canada to Britain and Europe by the Red Cross during WW II. The inventory included nightwear, robes, bandages, sheets, and surgeon's cloth masks, clothing, knitted hats, scarves, and mitts—and over 400,000 quilts.

The quilt angle quickened my interest after hearing Jo Andrews' story of the mystery quilt—thirty years in her possession—that originated in Gananoque, a two-hour drive from here. The time-twisted plot stirs and thickens.

Red Cross quilt researcher, Joanna Dermenjian, of Queens University in Kingston, casually contacted Jo Andrews; she subsequently interviewed one of the very few remaining quilters on behalf of Haptic and Hue. Centenarian Phyllis Vanhorne, who now lives in Gananoque, continued to make quilts for the next seven plus decades. Hearing about Phyllis and her Ottawa-regional proximity stirred my memory. Sure enough, Olly Chuchryk, an OOTB member, is one of Phyllis' three daughters.



Phyllis Vanhorne's 100th birthday surrounded by a fence of family quilts.

Olly's four young grandkids delight in selecting fabrics from their own treasure boxes in her studio, cutting and stitching under supervision. Imagine her consternation to discover, when she was unavailable, that these dear little rascals figured out how to turn on her Bernina and play! When we spoke, she was on her way to the repair shop to pick up her machine. Having inherited Phyllis and Olly's DNA, who knows what these young creatives will get up to next!

Forgotten Canadian quilts, forgotten Canadian women—women on active service on the nation-wide home front. As a Canadian, I feel shame and heartbreak over the national amnesia that Jo and Joanna document. Please join me in sharing this quilt story and the podcast that sheds light on a missing piece of Canada's recent history.

More details and photos of the Gananoque quilt stitched by the Winona Circle and of Phyllis and others mentioned in the podcast can be found at <https://hapticandhue.com/canadas-forgotten-quilts>

The website of Queen's researcher, Joanna Dermenjian, is filled with materials relating to the WW II Red Cross quilts, plus her other textile- and stitching-related discoveries. <https://sutureandselvedge.com>

What We've Always Known

by Sharon Dawn Johnson

Friends and fibre arts colleagues, Take Heart!

Certain fibre and textile developments in the contemporary art world only confirm what we've always known. Our well-tuned aesthetic sensibilities, our creative imaginings, and the practical stitching and making skills that give substance and form to our ideas are indeed worthy of the interchangeable names of *fibre artist* and *textile artist*.

The designation of *artist* and the expansive list of what now qualifies as bona fide *art materials* includes those diverse yet basic items long-familiar to us: needles and hooks, threads, flosses, cords, yarns, beads, fleeces and fibres raw and refined, woven and nonwoven cloth, specialty fabrics, canvas, and more. Enhancing this brief list are the many other multimedia elements, including botanicals, paints, adhesives, and an unending list of inventive additions to our artworks.

The following links provide a larger context in which to situate our artistic yearnings and community endeavours. We are artists worthy of the name—striving to uphold standards of excellence even as we continue to uplevel our skills and techniques.

1. The informative review below shows the interchangeable language that moves between fibre and textile usage without missing a beat.

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2024/feb/08/textile-art-unravel-barbican-art-gallery>

2. The lead photo showing Sheila Hick's thread-wrapped uprights reminds me of similar work exhibited at an OOTB show by member Garrie Bea Joyce.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/11/t-magazine/fiber-art-textiles.html>

- The sumptuous Red Dress delights the eyes as it stirs our fingertips. The dress' many global contributors remind me of those diverse stitchers who contributed to Canada's *Quilt of Belonging*. The Quilt is the collaborative work made possible by visionary artist, Esther Bryant, who shared the story of the Quilt's making at an OOTB meeting in 2017 or 2018.

<https://reddressembroidery.com/>

Quilt of Belonging <https://www.quiltofbelonging.ca>

Planning Committee

PC Convenor	Wendo Van Essen, Sandy Goldsmith
Education	Liz Tyrwhitt
Secretary	Cheryl Ford
Membership	Andrée Faubert
Treasurer	Marilyn White
Web-coordinator	MaryAnne Toonders
Newsletter	Helen Gordon
Facebook/Instagram	Cathy Haley haley.cathy@gmail.com
Library	Nancy Scott
Publicity/Marketing	Louise Dalonzo
Exhibitions/Shows	Connie ten Bruggenkate, Andree Faubert, Wendy Chaytor, Madeleine Rousseau, Sally Rutherford, Wendo Van Essen, Sandy Goldsmith
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