

Always Inspiration from the Garden

by Hilary Richardson

When I was very little, I had my own small plot. I grew flowers. Now I grow flowers and vegetables. My family has always gardened; I can't imagine life without a garden.

I enjoy it for its peace, colour and wildlife. It is very difficult to say how much influence it has on my work but it is one of the major factors along with the sea and the countryside.

In 1984, all my City & Guilds pieces were based on Monet's Lily Pond (right). My large quilt (all hand dyed) was *Lily Pond – after Monet*. My tutor was Joan York.

In 2004, the Quilters' Guild celebrated its 25th birthday and the RHS's 200th. An exhibition was arranged at the RHS garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon.

As a member of both, I wanted to enter a quilt. It had to be garden inspired. Not having a lot of time, I decided on a small quilt and made *Formal Bedding* (below) in memory of my grandad whose garden was always very formally arranged. It may have been small but the border gave me problems, eventually solved by my realising that hand quilting was the only choice. Then I had another idea that I decided I could do in time. I thought I would go with what we have in our garden. I set up the deck chair with quilt and champagne and photographed the group. The quilt on the chair is still unfinished and was the result of a Nancy Crow class at West Dean. I looked through books and found the trug of vegetables and wildlife. The background is hand dyed cotton. I used some dark background transfer paper for the wildlife. Most of the attachments are bonded and stitched. The butterflies were fixed onto separate pieces of fabric and only attached to the piece by their bodies. The geraniums are bonded but under them I printed, using real leaves to give depth. *Organic Patch* (next page, top right) lives in my daughter's house in Oregon now.

Susan Chapman's (Granary Studio) first



lockdown challenge ('Looking Through') was to find something to work from and photograph it. Mine became a study of the oak tree at the bottom of the garden. It started with a photo of a pile of wood which had a collection of leaves and an acorn cup.

I focused on the acorn cup. I drew, I painted, I made printing blocks. I expanded into acorns and leaves and made more blocks. I printed and discharged. I drew an oak seedling. When one first starts to grow, the shoot is red and the leaves are a reddish brown. I watched a series of free art Inspiration films: like Anthony Gormley, I used ink on wet paper; as Paul Smith, painted little squares in graded colours; I wrapped like Rana Begum. I wrapped, I painted little squares in graded colours and I used ink on wet paper. I made a book; I even made ink from oak galls. This is not my usual style of working but I really enjoyed it and have the nearest thing to a sketchbook I probably will ever have. Then I needed a piece of quilt work so I reverted to my usual methods.

I gathered together the samples I had made and arranged them in strips, the colours similar to the wrapping I made of the colours of an oak seedling. I needed to make more. I arranged them on a design board and moved them around until I was happy. This was tricky as it grew longer than the board. There are eco printed, thickened dye prints using leaves and discharged prints. The final arrangement fixed the design. I needed bark for the border. I had some grey commercially printed fabric and overdyed it with a bark effect and then bonded an organza branch over the top. Then I had to quilt it. The branch was easy, machined round its edges. I then decided that the only way for the rest was by hand. *Oak Study* was completed (right).

The garden supplied leaves for eco printing and, together with rusting brake discs, resulted in *Falling Leaves*. Finished during lockdown and prompted by a second challenge by Susan, this is hand quilted and embroidered (far right).

Now, apart from By Design's challenges, I am making CQ Journal Quilts, many of 2021's garden related.

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