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magazine

FOR ARTISTS

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Wrapped up

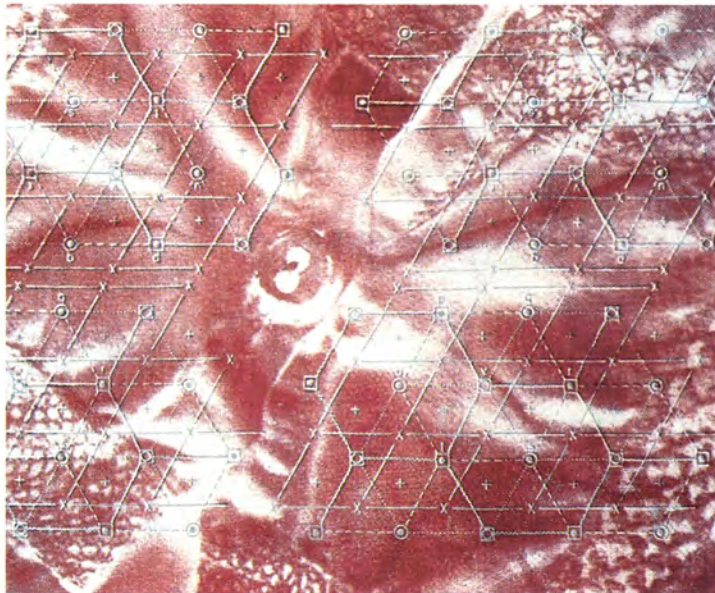
Art and games

Report from
the windy city

Douglas Gordon
interview

Over 40 exhibiting
opportunities





Clockwise from top left: **Joanna Kinnersley-Taylor**, *Precious connection*, 52x84, screen printed linen. **Barbara Kay Casper**, *Burning ember*, 23x23x23cm, linen, telephone wire. **Jeanette Appleton**, *Nomad*: *Red line of danger*, 50x103cm, felt, stitch and transfer printing. Opposite page: **Heather Belcher**, *Tagged*, 70x150cm, felt. All photos: Michael Wickes

Alive and kicking

Fiona Rutherford rounds up what's been happening with this artist-led textile group currently celebrating its ruby anniversary.

THE 62 GROUP OF TEXTILE ARTISTS was formed in November 1962, hence the eponymous name. It also means that this artist-led group is forty years old this month and very much alive and kicking into middle age.

The sixties provided few opportunities for embroidery graduates, so a small group of artists got together to create a new platform for their media. Its aim was to raise the profile of embroidery by mounting challenging exhibitions that would highlight the work of artists and encourage a dynamic approach in teaching. Over the decades it has grown from its embroidery infancy into the wider realms of contemporary textiles and consequently some of the UK's most well-known and innovative textile artists are or have been members at some time. That it has survived this length of time as a dynamic and ever-changing organisation is due largely to the rigorous selection process: membership is by annual selection. Members are also selected for each exhibition and if they fail to submit work or are rejected for three successive years then they forfeit their membership. In this way the group maintains a high standard of work whilst always regenerating itself.

Forty years is a long time for an artist-led group to survive, grow and establish a reputation. We decided that 2002 was a year in which we would celebrate our success rather than fall victim to any mid-life crisis and as a result the group is currently fielding three anniversary exhibitions: 'Red' a national touring exhibition opened in January at Bury St. Edmunds Gallery; 'Textiles in Context' opened in

the Textile Gallery at the Victoria & Albert Museum – the first time that the Museum has allowed the gallery to be taken over by a contemporary exhibiting group – and 'In Retrospect' is currently touring with 'The Knitting & Stitching Show' bringing together a collection of work that spans the last four decades. The exhibitions are documented in two full-colour catalogues.

How do we do it? The 62 Group is a network of professional artists that share, with each other, their views, contacts, time and determination to make events succeed. It is run entirely by the members for the members. Venues for exhibitions are suggested and, depending on the location, members in that area will be expected to help in the organisation; everyone is expected to give their time and expertise at some point.

A committee meets regularly, keeps in touch by email and coordinates the running of exhibitions, finances, education workshops, membership and publicity. Major decisions are made at the annual general meeting, usually held in London, where members can get together and air their views. We also send out a quarterly newsletter which keeps members in touch with each others work as well as ongoing exhibition news. A website set up two years ago informs a wider audience about current exhibitions and the work of individual members.

The human face of the 62 Group is very important and there is an active education programme accompanying all exhibitions. Members know that when they join they will be asked to give talks, demonstrations and workshops. Promoting and debating

the nature of contemporary textiles remains at the heart of the group's being.

Members have written diversely on textile theory and practice: Jac Scott's book *Textile Perspectives in Mixed Media Sculpture* and Joanna Kinnersley-Taylor's *Dyeing and Screen Printing on Textiles* (available in 2003), highlight this diversity and the need for critical thought within their subjects.

The group is a supportive framework for artists, provides a valuable network and source of friendship and now has an international membership. Making connections, generating ideas and creating new opportunities is what members can do for each other. To be part of an artist-led group is to tap into a larger energy that is vital to artists working on their own. That is why we welcome innovative textile artists who will be actively involved in the continuing development of the 62 Group.

FIONA RUTHERFORD IS A TEXTILE ARTIST BASED IN NEWCASTLE AND COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE 62 GROUP OF TEXTILE ARTISTS.

The next selection date for membership is 31 May 2003. Application forms are available and cost £1 from PO Box 16439, Glasgow G20 6WB or visit www.62group.freeuk.com

'Textiles in Context' is in Room 101, The Textile Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, London until 5 January; 'In Retrospect' is at RDS, Dublin 31 until 3 November and touring to International Hall, Harrogate 21-24 November; 'Red' is showing at Upfront Gallery, Penrith, until 24 December and then at Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham, 11 January – 23 February.