

Homemade

express yourself—made by you

with ve



Pretty birds
Garden decorations

CONFETTI CONES
GROW YOUR OWN
CONFETTI!

GLAMPING
Glam-up your outdoor dining

Naked Cake
MAKE YOUR OWN
WEDDING CAKE

Celebrate

Simple accessories for special occasions


**Fabulous
Fresh
Makes!**

Party Perfect

Great homemade ideas your guests will love for any celebration



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texture | colour | taste | vintage | fun | upcycle

Busy bees



It's no wonder that when communities get together for a shared purpose they call it a "bee"!



Great craft weekend offers at www.the-style-academy.com

Glam-up your outdoor dining... see page 80



Meet the Maker

Jo Riley



HWL: Tell us about yourself

JR: I am fortunate to live in a lovely part of Aberdeenshire, out in the sticks and surrounded by hills. As well as being a mum of three and looking after two dogs, a cat and a menagerie of hens and ducks, I am currently finishing a City & Guilds Diploma in Embroidery. I initially started hobby classes in patchwork, beading and basic stitching and this hobby has progressed into a labour of love. My love of drawing directed me towards a diploma and I aspired to be able to use threads like coloured pencils. This aspiration has led me to develop my skills in machine embroidery and I am using this technique more and more.

My diploma was based at Rainbow Fabrics in Oldmeldrum, where I was lucky to have the inspiration and support from amazing tutors. My sketchbook designs are now often the basis for either prints or embroidery, my pencil lines either being recreated as stitches or marks on the lino. I recently was fortunate enough to win a grant to develop work in using stitch and print together. This will be the next focus of intense work. So far, a lot of my designs have been inspired by nature, in particular birds. The appeal of embroidery initially came from seeing beautifully stitched pieces from the past. I now love to collect vintage pieces, which I either display or revamp with a modern twist. My ambition is to have my own studio, from which I can work and teach. I love teaching and would particularly like to be able to teach these traditional skills to young people. I am currently teaching art at a local primary school and find it very rewarding.

'MY AMBITION IS TO HAVE MY OWN STUDIO, FROM WHICH I CAN WORK AND TEACH'

Another exciting venture I have just become involved with is teaching at The Style Academy, situated at Glenmuick House on Royal Deeside (Aberdeenshire). Andrew Mellon, a bundle of energy and inspiration, has put together a fantastic and unique opportunity for people to come and learn a variety of skills from local artisans at a superb location. Glenmuick House is one of Scotland's arts and crafts gems. The hospitality and learning environment is sumptuous and I am lucky enough to have the opportunity to run a variety of courses from paper making to fine embroidery. We are also working with Johnstons of Elgin and are running courses using their gorgeous cashmere fabrics. The classes are about to start and I am really looking forward to it.

HWL: Have you received any handmade gift that you consider really special?

JR: I have received a number of handmade gifts that are dear to me. A good friend made my wedding garter which obviously has special memories. Another close friend made my daughter's christening dress that she hand smocked and also her christening shawl, which she knitted out of 2ply wool and was the first thing she knitted. This same friend also made my 40th birthday cake, it was the first cake she had ever made. She knew I loved the sea and so it was like a beach with beach huts, deck chairs, bunting and more. The cake is now gone but the photos will be kept! I also have a love spoon carved by a lovely neighbour in thanks for delivering food in snowy days!! My dad also loved working with wood and I have many things that he made, including a tiny wooden racket

for my Sindy doll. My children love making gifts, all of which are cherished, the bejewelled pasta pendants have progressed to bird tables! My husband is also on the list of creative givers and I enjoy sitting on a swing seat that he made me in our garden. I also have many well loved soft toys that my mum made me when little!

HWL: What is on your drawing board just now?

JR: I am currently finishing a project which I have been working on for a while. It has involved making seven flags, each embroidered with swallows. Together the images depict the swallows' arrival in spring through to their departure as autumn arrives.

HWL: What are your making essentials?

JR: I can't work without some sharp scissors, a hot iron, music and chocolate for when things go wrong!





'SO FAR A LOT OF MY DESIGNS HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY NATURE, IN PARTICULAR BIRDS'



HWL: Do you have any tips to share with other makers about making a craftspace?

JR: Make sure it has as much natural light as you can manage, I find this helps your eyes, your mood and gives a truer sense of colour. I also try to keep a flat space free as there are often sudden moments when you have something you need to put down somewhere! And never lose the aspiration of keeping it tidy even if you never achieve it!! Plenty of easy access storage is therefore essential.

HWL: Whose work do you love?

JR: I love the tapestries of Leila Thomson (from Orkney). I love the way she uses shape and the muted tones she works with. I also love the prints by Mark Hearld, again it is his use of shape and line that draw me to his work. Kaffe Fassett's use of colour has also always inspired me. I also

love the way in which Caroline Zoob puts so much detail into her embroideries yet manages to keep an overall look of simplicity.

HWL: Do you listen to music while you work?

JR: Yes, anything from The Killers to Beethoven!

HWL: Did you set any resolutions for 2013?

JR: Be more organised - it's the same every year which says so much!!

HWL: What's your best charity shop find or upcycled item?

JR: My vintage tool for re-shaping the fingers of ladies gloves. It is great for achieving good points in corners and turning things from being inside out.

HWL: Making wish list for 2013...

JR: To have the opportunity to teach and have a small exhibition. It



Samples from some of the classes that Jo teaches at The Style Academy

would also be nice to find time for a family holiday!

HWL: What's your favourite technique?

JR: Free-machine embroidery, although I am easily distracted by other techniques when I start hand stitching.

HWL: Are you a raving fan of any website or blogs that you want to share?

JR: I love 21st Century Yarns, they have always been so helpful and their dyed material is just

beautiful (www.21stcenturyyarns.com). The Style Academy, Glenmuick, they run great courses, not that I'm biased of course! (www.the-style-academy.com)

HWL: If you could recommend one or two book titles for makers/crafters, what would it be?

JR: *The Linen Cupboard* by Gloria Nicol, a book I bought years ago and which I love to refer back to for inspiration and *Sketchbook and Journal Quilts* by Ineke Berlyn. This is always good to look at when you need inspiration.