

sustenance

2º INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF LACE IN ART & DESIGN

DOILY
FREE
ZONE



#DFZ2021

Doily Free Zone is curated by Angharad Rixon

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Cover image: Fiona Harrington, *Fragile Economies* (trio),
2020, handmade needle lace, eggshells, dimensions
variable

Photo by Kate Bowe O'Brien

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Preface

In response to the uncertain times we are living through, the theme of the 2021 edition of Doily Free Zone is Sustenance. The changes needed to make this edition happen prompted me to examine what really lies at the heart of this project and sustaining creativity, sustaining traditions and technical know-how, and sustaining our community were the answers that arose.

Fiona Harrington's beautiful 2020 work *Fragile Economies* was selected as the cover for this edition as it encapsulates the theme so poignantly; both the fragility of life as we knew it in the face of a pandemic and the resilience of lacemaking across the centuries, reminding us of the role of lacemaking as a source of creative and economic sustenance for so many women.

A profession that could be practiced from home while caring for their families, that also connected these women to other makers and to other worlds which were far beyond their personal realities. The curious way that the efforts of many working in small communities could come together to dress a Queen, or to represent their country at a World Fair. Miracles of textile art made by anonymous makers, or, as one of this year's contributors Mariña Regueiro says, "the hands in the shadow".

Today many lacemakers no longer live in the shadows, however there is still work to be done to shine more light on the unique creative possibilities which handmade lace techniques offer to the world of contemporary art and design. Fostering collaboration with other disciplines and encouraging artists working in related fields to explore lacemaking will preserve these precious skills for future generations while driving them to evolve and flourish.

At present so many of us find ourselves housebound, and yet we are not in solitude; we have a myriad of ways to share our love of lace. Every lacemaker in this edition has reached out from their home or studio to share their work and expertise with a community spanning 28 countries, the digital format has opened DFZ up to people of all ages and to many who are curious to know more about lace but who would not have travelled for an in-person event.

#DFZ2021 has shown us that we can not only survive but thrive thanks to this electronic web that united us all around the globe for the symposium and that will maintain this connection as we work through the workshops together.



Angharad Rixon Founder DFZ



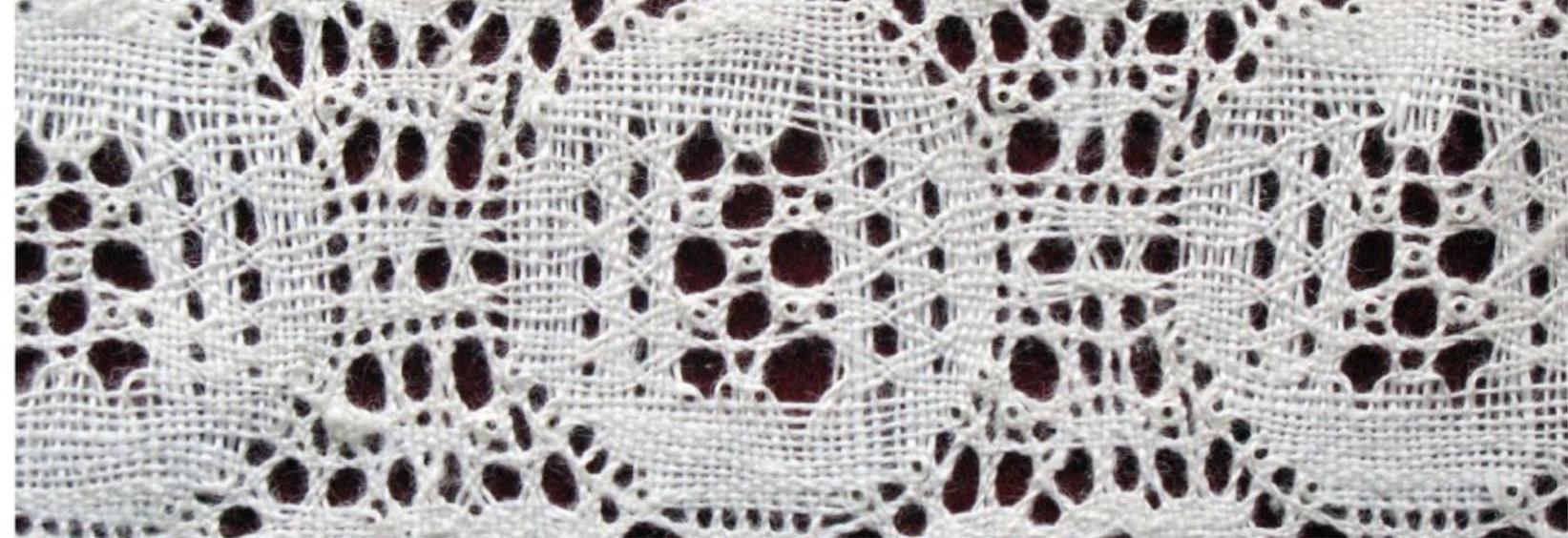
"THE BOW" 2015, Cotton sewing machine Modinetje,nº 60

Mariña Regueiro

In the extreme western part of Spain, at the end of the Camino de Santiago, in the lands where during the Middle Ages it was believed that Europe ended, there is a great lace tradition.

In 1983 I opened the first Lace Summer School in Spain in a fishing village on the Costa da Morte: Corme (La Coruña), 25 miles from Camariñas, the Galician lace center that had enough lacemakers to supply Torchón and Guipur laces to stores throughout the country. There were then only two official schools in Spain; one in Madrid and one in Barcelona that operated during the winter.

At the time there was a deep interest in the old skills that had been abandoned in many Spanish lace centers in the 60s with the incorporation of women into the labor market. In Galicia lace was preserved because the region did not become industrialized as in other parts of Spain. Galicia kept its rural world intact and when, in Camariñas I said that I was going to open a lace school, the answer was; "and who is going to want to learn lace?" I answered, "if I want to learn, others like me will!"



"THE SUN" (17th C Spanish domestic lace) 2016, Linen, Bokens n° 50

OIDFA was created in 1982 and throughout Europe a renewed interest in lace began. Unknowingly, in a world without the internet, my school had become one more contribution to the resurgence of lace in Europe.

My students became teachers and needed to be able to do it professionally. It was necessary to create a modern method adapted to the contemporary woman; the woman who wanted to receive the right answer to the how, when, and where. I dedicated myself to systematizing Spanish lace techniques. The task could only be done through textile diagrams which were not used in traditional lace teaching. In the first year

of my school the Finnish lacemaker Marketa Palo – married to a Belgian and who was doing an end-of-career study on the lace of her country – taught me the Belgian system of creating diagrams.

Since those early years my passion has been teaching and historical research about lace. I toured Spain teaching courses and invited the best lace teachers from other countries to teach at my school to raise the level of Spanish teachers.

Spain has many types of lace that had to be discovered and brought back to the light and among them I discovered a fascinating world:



"AUSTRALIA" 2014, Cotton sewing machine Modinetje nº 60

Spanish braid lace. The lace of Hinojosa del Valle, La Punta Capitana, La Randa...the lace of Cándida. Behind all these lace techniques I always found the maker's hands in the shadow; anonymous lacemakers, unnamed women.

Cándida's lace is an island in the world of lace techniques. She came from humble beginnings, and yet each pattern was signed with her name, Cándida García. Each pattern was specially designed for a single student, only one piece was made for each pattern, nothing was made to be sold and no one knew of its existence outside of the families that practiced it. But with the collaboration of the last heiress of this technique, Rocío Utray Delgado, I have been able to access the history, the world, and

the last remaining students of this designer and teacher to offer this artistic jewel to the international world of lace. The precious archive is now conserved in the National Museum of Decorative Arts in Madrid.

In recent years I have worked in design schools that has allowed me to put contemporary lace techniques at the service of young fashion designers with great success. The learning has been mutual. A lifetime dedicated to teaching and research has put me in direct contact with the emotions, soul, and delicate spirit of women. Giving a voice to these women has become my primary job.

[Mariña's website](#)



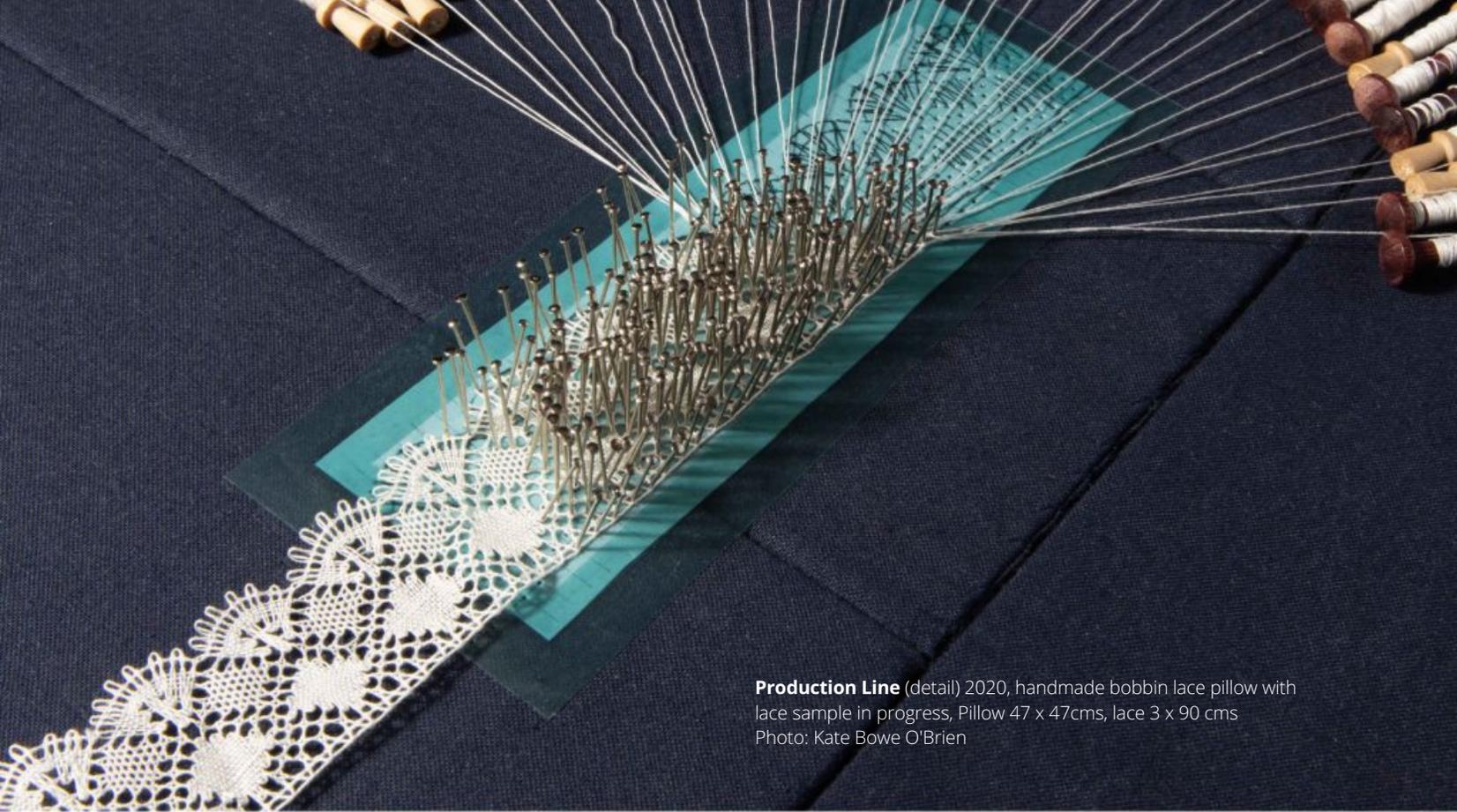
Fragile Economies (cluster) 2020, handmade needle lace, eggshells, dimensions variable. Photo: Kate Bowe O'Brien

Fiona Harrington

I have been working with handmade lace exclusively as my medium since 2012. Initially I was interested in understanding the structures of the fabric, however once I began making, I was captivated. Since then I have spent my time researching, writing, learning and making lace. My mother was a talented dressmaker who also made lace and while I never had the opportunity to learn from her, I firmly believe it was very much in my blood. In this way I feel a sense of ownership over the process and deeply connected with the history and tradition that stretches back generations.

The focus of my current research and studio practice is on the social and economic importance of Irish lace and how its history has been intertwined into present day narratives associated with domestic activity, female labour, memory and material culture.

I'm interested in conveying the nuances of these accounts. Historically, lacemaking was thought to be an appropriate pastime for women of high moral stature. However, it was also used to 'reform' those considered to be of low moral value and is associated with the forced labour of women, incarcerated in state



Production Line (detail) 2020, handmade bobbin lace pillow with lace sample in progress, Pillow 47 x 47cms, lace 3 x 90 cms
Photo: Kate Bowe O'Brien

run institutions, such as the Magdalene laundries. Yet, during the late 19th and early 20th century, when females had no right to vote, lace earnings provided independence and agency, as Ireland became one of the few countries from which unmarried women could emigrate.

It would appear that by making lace, women were both liberated and controlled. This is a fascinating contradiction and one which I examine through the process of learning and acquiring the same skills. While attaining

technical excellence is hugely important to a lacemaker, my interest is in applying those skills in a different format and presenting lace as something other than its original intended purpose, which was a frivolous and decorative fabric.

Through my work as artist, curator and researcher, I challenge preconceived notions of what lace is considered to be and how lace is used. In doing this I create a space in which a dialogue between traditional craft practice and contemporary art can emerge.



Fragile Economies (detail) 2020, handmade needle lace, eggshells, dimensions variable. Photo: Kate Bowe O'Brien

Biography

Fiona Harrington is a visual artist who works with handmade lace. She studied fine art painting, textile design and lacemaking. She recently completed an MA in Art and Research Collaboration and was awarded a first class honours degree. The focus of both her academic and studio practice was on Irish Lace.

Fiona has been the recipient of the Thomas Damann Bursary, RDS Graduate Prize, National Craft Award, Eleanor de la Branchardiere Prize, Traditional Lacemakers of Ireland Award and a Percent for Art Commission.

Her work has been exhibited widely and she has travelled extensively giving talks and demonstrations on Irish Lace, at amongst others, The Textile Arts Centre, New York, 2018 and Straight Out of Ireland exhibition, Philadelphia, 2019.

She curated The Space Between, an international lace exhibition which was part of Galway European Capital of Culture 2020.

In June 2020, she was selected to exhibit her work at a three-person exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland, entitled Lace Paint Hair. Most recently she took part in Cohost, an online group exhibition in collaboration with the Lab Gallery in Dublin.

Fiona's website

Jane Atkinson

Lace is the perfect medium - its arcane but fascinating equipment constantly beckons, drawing me into projects which offer a mix of observation, design history, thread research, drawing, drafting and sampling to reduce an idea to its essence, before it opens into the pleasure of making. I live lace.

Wherever I go I keep an eye for decorative details which add to the soup of ideas in my head or my library. Many traditional laces have place names, so I started designing with the desire to devise a Dorset lace, drawing ideas from my locality. AWN Pugin, who designed the decorative detailing in the UK Houses of Parliament, advocated drawing from wild flowers to create authentic British designs; when I got to Budapest for a lace festival, I found the architect of their Parliament had been a big fan of Pugin, and when drawing my own plant studies I referred to both – I don't know why other people travel, but I drink everything in as inspiration.

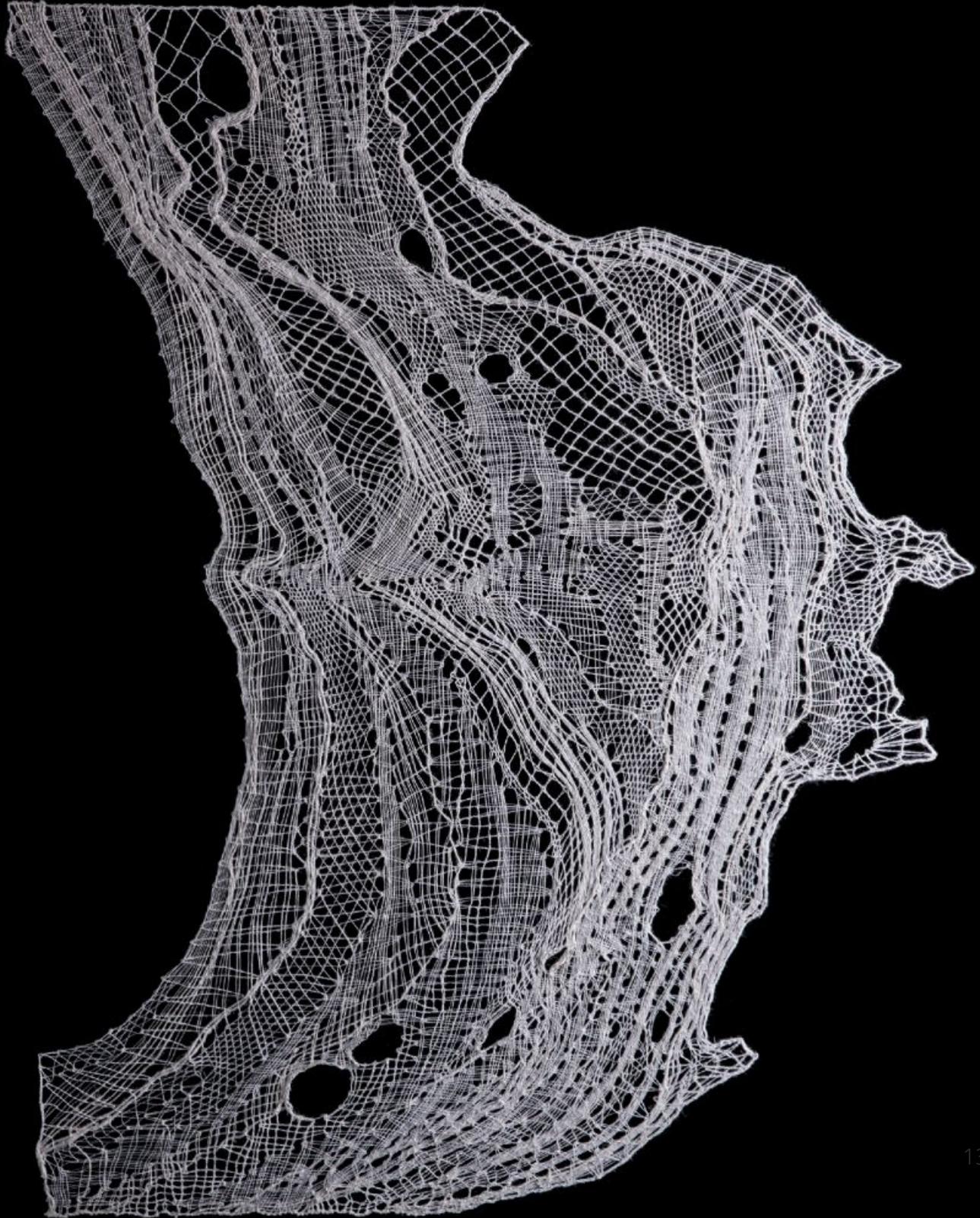
Making can be meditative, testing, methodical, repetitive and rhythmic; but sometimes, I work by the seat of my pants, following nature's lead

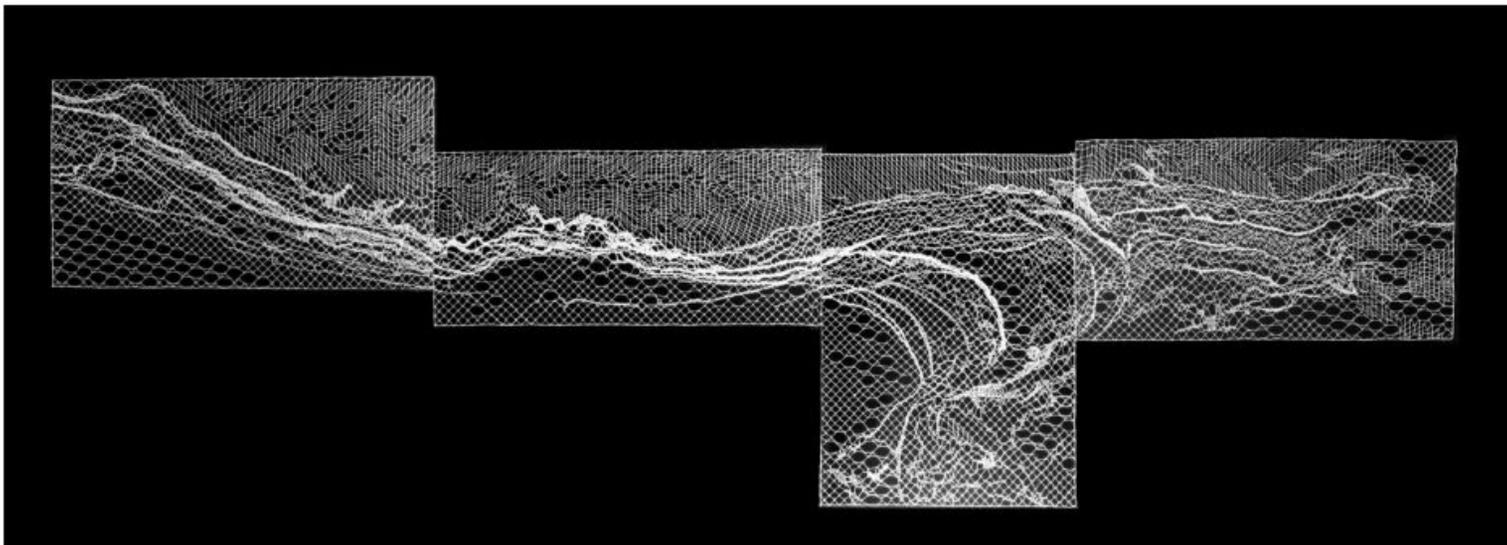
and making up the answers as I go. I then draw my techniques from the needs of the moment, from past memories or make them up on the spot.

I may start with vague plans, and have to abandon them immediately, the solution only revealing itself as my hands move over my pillow. I may only be able to concentrate on work of this difficulty for half an hour, before I hit a road block and need to retreat to the ironing. Freed, my subconscious usually works it out for me, and off I go again the next day.

However, I do need life to be calm, to be able to relax into something like this; emotional or societal turmoil remove the peace of mind that allows me to float with such problems. Then I go back to more comforting work, and I always have something of that nature on a smaller pillow for the evening; it refills the pot emptied by a busy day and I go to bed serene.

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Seableed, 2018, linen, 58 x 43cm.
Photo: Peter Smith





Oxygen 1-4 2015/16, Czech and handspun linen, 1, 31 x 56cm; 2, 25 x 56cm; 3, 52 x 38cm; 4, 29 x 55cm. Photo: Peter Smith

Much of my recent work responded to climatic changes I observed on my daily walks, over two decades, the record of which is often the thin memory of an ephemeral event – I watched trees die when de-barked by ponies, become ghosts, and photographed them the day before they were torn down in a violent storm. My photo diary records scenes I find beautiful, just because they are, and then I return to them when I realise they are also significant, I just didn't know it at the time. My lace develops in retrospect.

Pattern has always been my bag, historic, scientific, cultural, meaningful, man-made rhythm and natural broken symmetry where

nature sets up a process and then demolishes it in enthralling ways. My aim is to signal that nature patterns the landscape to message the health or distress caught up in what we are seeing, perhaps supporting new life by generating oxygen or causing harm as an alien seaweed rots and toxifies home waters.

The pandemic tore me from my usual landscape, and from the extended one in which I intended to explore how man has patterned my valley over hundreds of years. I shielded with my husband, first creating pattern-design videos (to be used in Doily Free Zone, only I didn't know it then) to spread to others the processes I have devised to promote pattern skills.

But all through, I worked up metres of shaded stitches to create a cloud installation to focus back on the climate, ever conscious of the carbon we add each year to our delicate atmosphere – our global lockdown was hardly a blip in this, showing the truly awful scale of the sacrifices we need to make, but still cannot grasp.

I work with, although not exclusively, Torchon, the most disregarded skill in the lace hierarchy, yet the most known and familiar. It has what Prof. Sarah Lewis has called 'the gift of being underestimated', overlooked and denigrated, its potential often lying unseen beside its swankier cousins.

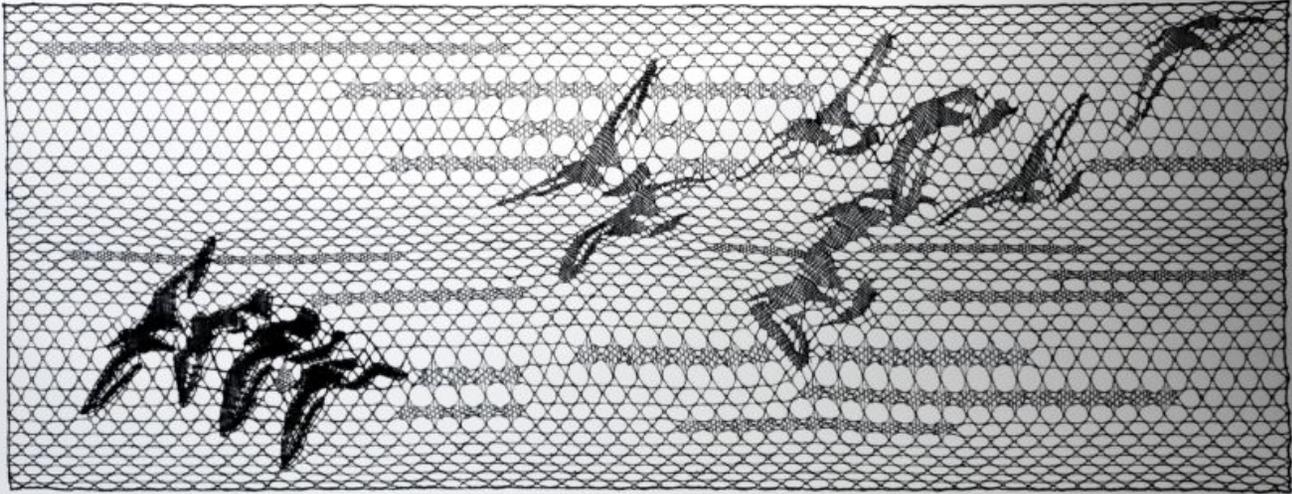
It is a gift most lacemakers have in their hands, yet often reach away from, but it can be made in any scale, from the delicate to the robust. It can be decorative, useful, hard-wearing or sketch a tale, bring a message, cause a pause. Its makers can slip easily into design skills with a bit of time, patience and direction – encouraging them has taken me around the world.

I jumped out of journalism and, to my great good fortune, the lace parachute opened; I have been immensely lucky to have found such an enthralling career, and some wonderful friends.

Autumn thistle 2017; mixed linen and hemp.

Photo: Peter Smith





On the Trawl 2017, linen, 32 x 81cm. Photo: Peter Smith

Biography

Jane Atkinson originally trained in commercial languages before becoming a journalist, but has spent half her life designing and making contemporary lace. She has written three books and innumerable articles on the subject, and taught extensively around the UK, as well as in France, Switzerland and Spain, around America and across Australia.

Lace and lace design she taught herself, with the aid of national and local design and Fine Art courses and books. She has exhibited since 1987 and has held two solo UK exhibitions; 'Ebb'b'Flow, 2018, was sponsored by Arts Council England.

With Denise Watts, she has exhibited around Europe at lace festivals in Poland, Hungary,

Austria, Croatia, France, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Spain. In 2019 they shared 'Fils Comuns', for the Lace Museum in Arenys de Mar, Catalonia.

She was selected for 'Lace, not Lace' at the Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, New Jersey, in 2018, along with Pierre Fouché, Denise Watts and Dagmar Beckel-Machycková, with whom she now collaborates on Patreon as 'The Adventurous Lacemakers'. They aim to empower bobbin lace as an artistic medium that can express an individual's truth, by offering creative support to contemporary lacemakers who would like to take their craft to new heights.

[Jane's website](#)



Paula Hart

I am a West Australian visual artist of recognized excellence working in the areas of public and participatory arts, with a broad range of disciplines. I enjoy exploring stories of people and community and examining the notions of place and identity - Engaging with the local community generally leads to those gems of personalised local identity that creates great ownership of the artwork, and a little tantalising mischief often missing in public works. Stories that build a real picture and recognition of a place by unlocking surprising or forgotten histories and narratives.

Jacaranda 2019, Mount Pleasant Woolworths, LaceFence.
Photo: Miles Noel

Over the past 30 years I have created a busy public art studio practice and work regularly with an established network of collaborators and fabricators.

Certainly one of the strongest aspects of my work is my ability to work together with young people to make artworks that represent them. In 2014 I created my first Lace Fence for West Leederville Primary School. First and foremost, the school wanted a student participation driven project and I was awarded the commission based upon my working methods, before I knew anything of Joep and his Lace Fence.

The children's ideas, drawings and participation needed to be central and so the drawing workshops drove the design process.

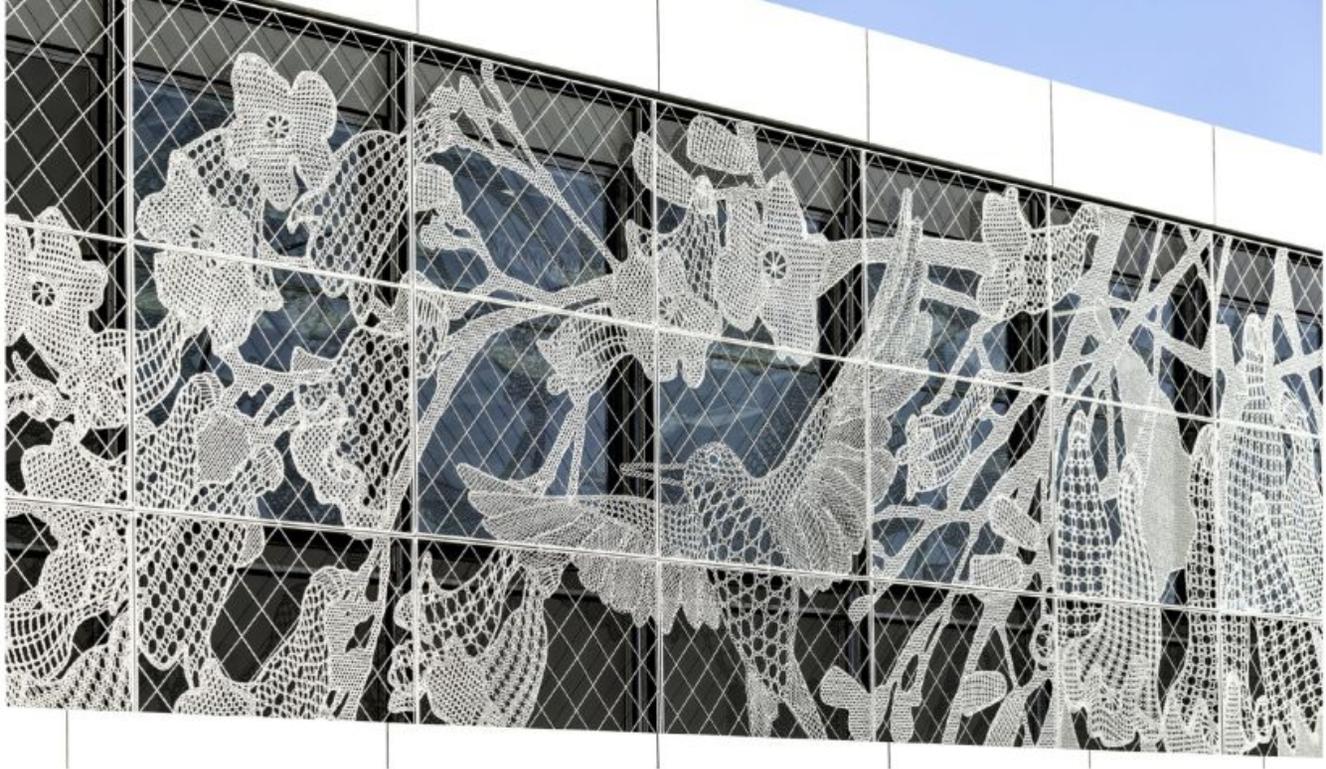
Researching various materials I stumbled across Lace Fence and was astonished that when I rang the studio number in Amsterdam I found myself talking directly with Dutch designer Joep Verhoeven, and he was saying sure, let's do a project together.

I originally studied in textiles at WAIT, in Western Australian the early 80s. I did a lot of machine embroidery, but on the whole I was rather averse to the traditions of Textiles. After graduating I ran a screen printing design business called Haughty Culture. It was quite cutting edge for the era, but we didn't have the business savvy to grow like Mambo and other emerging textiles designers. I then found myself heavily involved with textiles through the resurgence of the Union Banner movement. This union work led more into community and participatory projects and gradually the textiles aspects just dropped away. My arts practice embraced public art works, large scale murals, Arts in the education sector, professional theatre commissions, digital photomontage, massive papier-mâché

sculptures for parades & festivals and even food events. Which was why this circle back to lace was all the more astonishing.

Since the first Lace Fence with West Leederville Primary School, I have developed a strong working relationship with Dutch designer Joep Verhoeven and his design house Redfort Architectural Fabrics. Redfort is a company that believes in 21st -century craftsmanship for architecture and their products sit well with my practice and ethos. We have gone on to create four further works together with these beautiful steel lace stitches, delivering public artworks that combine master craftsmanship with off-the-shelf materials.

In 2020 our Jacaranda Lace Fence on the Woolworths store in Mount Pleasant was recognised in the internationally acclaimed CODAwards. These awards celebrate the projects that most successfully integrate commissioned art into interior, architectural, or public spaces around the world. Jacaranda achieved top 5 in the People's Choice Awards and WINNER in the Commercial category from nearly 500 entrants across 36 countries.



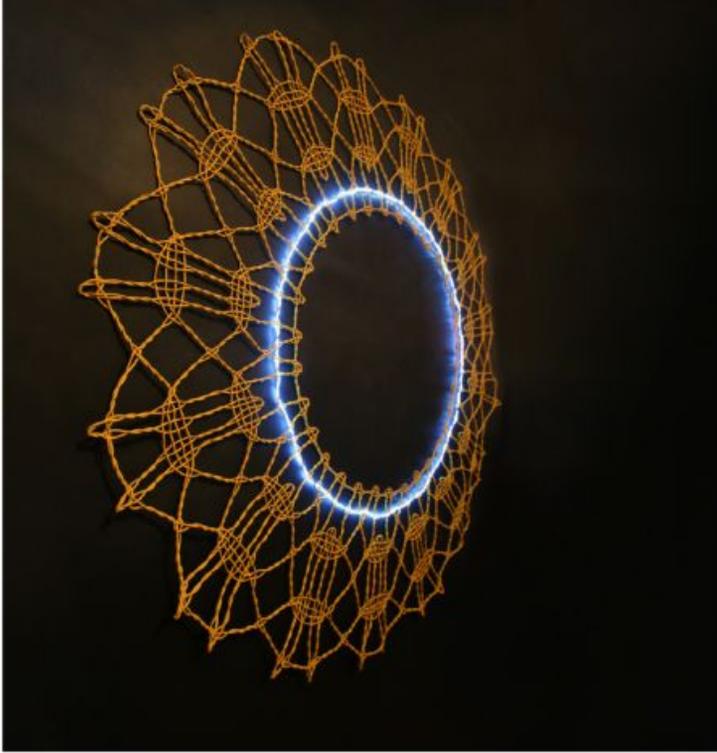
Jacaranda 2019, Mount Pleasant Woolworths, LaceFence,
Photo: Dan McBride

Biography

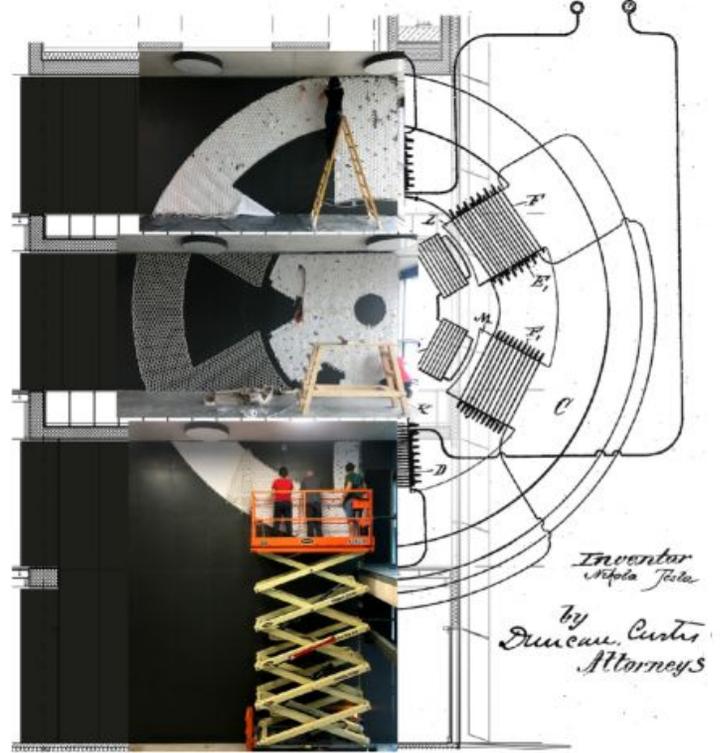
Paula occupies a unique position in the Western Australian arts community. She is an independent visual artist who has diversified her working life in several clear directions whilst maintaining a visual arts practice of the highest calibre. Embracing public artworks, the arts & education sector and festival arts, she works with a driving commitment to create art employing processes of community

participation, cultural mapping and identity. Paula is extremely well traveled and her eclectic artistic practice is born of an internationalist perspective. Always, she engages with these areas at an elite professional level with great dedication, intelligence, passion and good humour.

[Paula's website](#)



Corona 2014, fiber optic cable, EL wire, 1.5m dia.



Tesla Enlaced 2018, 3 core electric cable, fiber optic cable, 8.1m x 12.8m. Photos: Manca Ahlin

Manca Ahlin

Bobbin lace has been integral part of my local culture in Žiri, Slovenia, where I grew up. Every house would own some lace pieces and nearly half of the population knew how to make bobbin lace, so it was my belief that lace making is just something people do in their spare time. Later on, when I moved abroad, I realized what a treasure this centuries old tradition actually is.

Studying industrial design and architecture provided me with academic knowledge on the contemporary design practice and expanded my creative horizons. Immersing myself in the field of computer assisted design and creating virtual environments I started to feel increasingly lost in the globalized field of generic worlds of architectural visualizations that was detached from the physical



environment. I wanted a more direct contact with the materials and to be in control of the fabrication and execution of my own designs. Reaching back to my origins and exploring the potential of lace structures in various materials to create three-dimensional objects offered me direct physical connection with the object I was creating.

As a trained architect I am used to thinking about an object through its relation to space. While lace has always been made and used as a flat piece of fabric, as interior decoration or in fashion, I want to subvert this. Also following the principles of sustainable and zero waste practice, my intent is to make lace again a relevant player in the field of contemporary



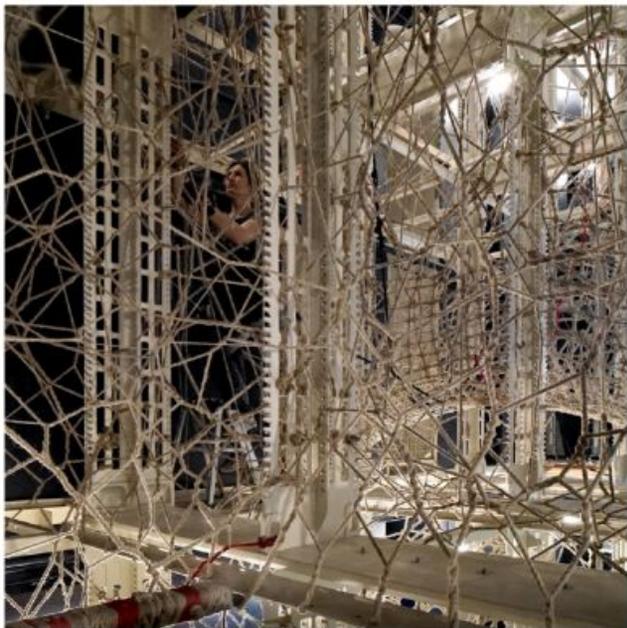
design and to discard its stigma of benign little doily on grandmother's shelf. Through the computer aided design methods that allow me to create shapes previously impossible to conceive by hand, with the change in scale and use of construction materials and tools, I was able to add to the traditional two dimensional lace structures a third, spatial dimension and expand its scope of functional uses.

It feels like a privilege to have come from a secluded mountain village and to preserve and present local heritage to the melting pot of global cultures in New York. It was a perfect place to inspire and revive traditional practices with contemporary applications for the global audience.



The Cosmic Egg

2015, silver wire, 6cm dia x 8cm



Gymnasium 2020, hemp, cotton, linen, jute rope, 11.6m x 7.3m x 8m

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Grapes and Olives Screen 2014, hemp rope, 10.5m x 3m

Žiri Lace Timeline 2019, hemp rope, 5.5m x 4.5m

Photos: Manca Ahlin

Biography

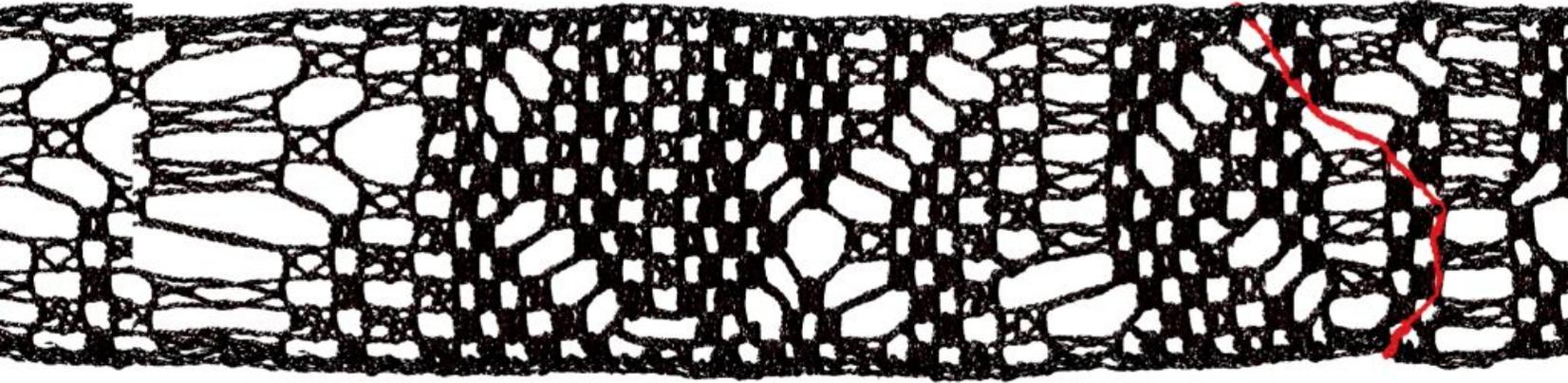
Growing up in the highlands of Western Slovenia, Manca needed to feed her creativity, constantly exploring hand crafts that were present in the daily farm life. From her parents and grandparents she learned everything from crochet and knitting to basket weaving and carpentry.

During entire primary school she was attending the Lace School in Žiri, which is with its 110 years of operation one of the main centers of lacemaking in the region.

Studying product design and architecture in Ljubljana and Barcelona she stepped away from traditional crafts and directed her focus towards contemporary, computer driven methods of design. Besides architectural design she would also create virtual environments for a number of architectural offices, private clients and museums.

After years of successful collaborations in architecture, where she also won numerous awards, Manca became increasingly interested in the connection between architectural space and lace. Currently based in New York, Manca explores the intersection between traditional craft and contemporary design through her brand Mantzalin. She moves easily through several levels of scale in her fabrications, from jewelry pieces to large architectural and interactive installations.

[Manca's website](#)



Fabric Detail 2016-ongoing, Cotton bobbin lace, 6"wide, length ongoing. Photo: Olivia Valentine

Matthusen/Valentine

between systems and grounds

Artifact

Here, we begin with the “end product”, a piece of lace, which can also serve as the beginning. This ongoing project is a feedback loop that continually feeds itself. When people see between systems and grounds, they see the lace fabric artifact, but this is only one product of a multi-layered process that involves the live-generation of audio and lace simultaneously. In sound-based performance work, the artifact is often a time-based document, such as a

recording. In between systems and grounds, multiple artifacts are created simultaneously.

The physical object, a spool of lace several meters long, has been made over the course of five years of intermittent performance. It is both an object, and also the artifact of the time, sound, and labor spent. While the entirety of the experience is not contained in the twelve cell rose ground pattern with varying cell heights, the fabric also happens upon the occasional run, and alternates between several different ground stitch variations.

Through this length of evolving fabric we have a sense of this durational performance, played out over years across time and space and places. This physical trace of the fabric can also become the score, enabling the playback of time-compressed recordings of previous performances. The foamcore-constructed system that supports the lace and audio production then acts as a music box, reading the lace through a system of photocell triggers and playing previous recordings at their own, slowly advancing speed.

Activity

between systems and grounds began from a curiosity to bring two practices (lacemaking and feedback-based electronic music) together that differ in their conventional workings and yet share a common sense of orientation and curiosity. A key part of the system we have created is feedback. From a literal perspective, audio feedback is one of the points of genesis, implicating the space and the bodies in it, through the process of resonating the space we share.

Another genesis of the audio is the sounds of work and production. This project started with a recording of wooden bobbins clanking on

foamcore boards. The sound of bobbins moving, hitting the work surface and exciting the acoustical spaces we share is acoustically striking on its own, and is amplified to bring out the acoustical resonances of the space. The percussive sound of bobbins not only weaves a thread through the audio recordings, but also creates its own output in the form of time datapoints and as a method to create time-compressed recordings.

Space

A key aspect of between systems and grounds is that we must share both space and time while working together. When we begin work in a new space, we look for acoustically unique places to position ourselves and adopt idiosyncratic microphone placements to bring out environmental or acoustical particularities of the space. When we improvise, the space mediates the interaction. This approach has led us to a range of environments to work in – from a grain silo to a lighting factory and partially enclosed outdoor pavilions.

A set of portable, collapsible foamcore furniture makes this mobility and site-specificity possible. Each performance is meticulously documented with stop-motion animation, that





is later paired with audio from the site. Each location is also demarcated in the lace with a red line stitched between location change.

Time

Since sharing space and time are essential, each performance lasts for an extended duration of time. Though we refer to this time generally as performance, we actively avoid the hallmarks of conventional performance – a stage, audience, fixed beginning and end times, etc. Instead, we set up extended durations in which we work, and people may come and go as they please. These events have happened for hours and sometimes days, varying with small, intimate audiences, sometimes none at all, and other times spaces overflowing with

people and other activity.

Time is also manipulated and compressed and extended, both within our work time and the various forms of time-based documentation. This happens through stop-motion animation, using still images taken at intervals to create a continuous, though fragmented visual documentation, and also in the audio recordings themselves, which exist both as real-time recordings and a time compressed version controlled by the percussive strike of the bobbins working on foamcore.

Recently, we have taken to working closer to the edges of the day, looking out a window at sunset, for example, or through the passing darkness of a storm.

Biographies

Olivia Valentine is an interdisciplinary visual artist working in textile construction, drawing, and photography, creating architectural scale textile installations and collaborative projects that span a variety of media and disciplines.

She is the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship for Installation Art in Turkey and the Brandford/Elliott Award for Excellence in Fiber Arts. Recent exhibitions include Museum of Arts and Design (New York), the Danish Royal Academy (Copenhagen), and The American Academy in Rome (Italy).

Olivia received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Culture at Iowa State University.

Paula Matthusen is a composer who writes both electroacoustic and acoustic music and realizes sound installations. Her work often considers discrepancies in musical space—real, imagined, and remembered.

You can learn more about their collaboration on [their website](#).

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Katonah, NY, Sonic Innovations Exhibition, part of the Caramoor Summer Music Festival, 2018.

Chicago, IL, ACRE Projects Gallery, 2017.

Chicago, IL, CHIMEFest 2020 at the University of Chicago, 2020.

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Rabun Gap, GA, Pump House, the Hambidge Center, 2018.

Sheboygan, WI, Kohler Arts Center (With installation Beauty Surplus: Serra Victoria Bothwell Fels), 2019.

Photos: Olivia Valentine

Lindy de Wijn

I first saw bobbin lace being made at around 10 years of age when a family friend from the UK visited my grandfather. I was mesmerised by the bobbins dancing on the pillow. The rhythm of the process, the beauty of the outcome and the stories behind each bobbin was like a living fairy-tale being created before my eyes.

It took a few years to find a teacher in Melbourne so I started making lace in my early teens. I am eternally grateful to my teacher, who nervously accepted my invitation. She was reluctant as she had no formal qualifications to teach and this was at a time when the Australian Guild perhaps did not encourage such practices. To this very day I reflect with gratitude on her willingness and courage to take the plunge and share her knowledge as it allowed my lace journey to commence with weekly classes walking distance from my high school.

There is something unique about slow arts. The labour and care of the maker imbues the finished form adding a visceral quality. The history, stories, tradition, skill and time is captured in each creation. The honesty of mistakes and imperfections add to the quality and uniqueness of the form. This is often juxtaposed with a lacemaker's desire for

perfection in design and execution, a concept I personally continue to grapple with.

I love all styles of lace and am a master of none. Being in Australia I am not wedded to a lace from my place of origin. Over the years I have learnt to relax my obsession for perfection and blend techniques and styles in my lace design. I used to be afraid to admit such things for fear of disrespecting traditions. Now, I strongly believe there is room for both traditional and contemporary lace practices and in order to enable lace to thrive for generations to come such practice is vital. Lace has evolved over centuries. It is a living narrative told through thread and this narrative will continue to evolve in the centuries to come.

In 2000, in my early 20s, I took a lace class in wire with Lenka Suchanek and this opened a whole new world to me for now I could see lace in three dimensions! The true sculptural possibilities of lace became apparent. This is an area that I want to continue to explore in my future practice.

In 2008 and nearing my 30s, I left my role as an occupational therapist to study a Masters in Public Art and after a few years of coordinating community arts projects I decided it was time



Connection 2018, cotton rope, 250cm x 985cm, Bundoora Homestead, for Craft Lab+. Photo: Andrew de Wijn

to weave my lace practice into my public art practice.

Over the past 10 years I have made an array of works. From small tokens of discovery in wire to large scale rope works spanning several metres. I love the diversity lace provides. Simple threads are transformed in a myriad of ways and provide endless designs. Scale, material and methods can be warped, stretched and twisted. A design can be worked in the finest of wires and then be translated to a thickest of ropes. The positive and negative

space in lace design translates so well to public art as the depth and shadow create stunning visual effects in the landscape. In a world where hard surfaces dominate, lace can soften a structure. Conversely the design qualities can echo architectural forms. My drive is to create lace installations that capture these possibilities and for the public to see there is so much more to lace than doilies. In many ways I am still emerging in my practice and will be for life as there are so many ideas in my mind to translate into lace installations and share with the world.



Connection 2 2019, cotton rope, 250cm x 250cm, Heritage Hill Museum and Historic Gardens, for Cultural Threads.
Photo: Lindy de Wijn

Biography

Lindy de Wijn is a process driven artist and arts coordinator with a degree in Occupational Therapy and a Masters in Public Art. Lindy uses her skills to connect with people, place and time to create site specific installations and art.

In more recent years Lindy has incorporated her lace making skills into her arts practice, taking traditional lace techniques and presenting them in new ways.

[Lindy's website](#)

Tarmo Thorström

In recent years, on a personal level, bobbin lace has been a way to express myself. As one photographs and another paints, I make lace. Not always of fibre, but the idea and theme always grows somehow from bobbin lace making or the culture around it. It is a medium for making both art and craft.

My background is quite far from the lace world. As a teenager I was mostly interested in roleplaying games, computers and science fiction literature. Later boy scouts and amateur theatre filled my days. At university I studied to be a primary school teacher. In the Finnish educational system they teach from 6 to 12 year old children all the subjects. I found that fitting as I have always been interested in all sorts of things, sort of *Jack of all trades* but master of none.

In 2005 I met Impi Alanko, a grand old lady of bobbin lace making. She offered to teach me the basics and said that afterwards I could continue by myself if I wanted. I agreed and I studied elementary bobbin lace under her guidance. I didn't get very far as she got cancer and we had to quit our studies. As we had become friends, we continued seeing each

other in the hospital until she passed away in 2007. More than the bobbin lace skill itself she taught me a way to view the life – and bobbin lace too.

In the winter 2008 I was enjoying a sauna after skiing on a frozen lake. I suddenly remembered bobbin lace making. I found the technique mesmerizing but the end results uninteresting. I had no other solution than to start designing my own patterns in order to make something interesting on a personal level. This, as I later realized, became the key in getting me hooked. The history of bobbin lace goes back in time 500 years and is born from men's fashion. Not just any men but those who had high position and wealth. Lace was a way to show status. As I've always been interested in history I decided to go to the deep roots and make something fashionable for myself. I chose to make men's ties as it seemed a well-fitting garment to decorate with lace.

I had no idea how to start. I had no teacher or any other whom to ask. Neither I had any books. All I had was my stubborn will. This left me with the trial-and-error method. I designed a tie, made it, and discovered two things: it was

hideous but by shape and size it resembled a tie. I considered it a success enough to try it again. The same process and end result followed. The second was also awful but there was slight improvement from the first. I repeated this process a few times more and it was fifth or sixth that I was satisfied enough with to show the result to some of my friends.

This learning by doing was what got me connected to bobbin lace. I was still a beginner in the skill but I was already in love in it. As a continuation of the learning process I started to use atypical materials and also to design new kinds of works. My approach to bobbin lace making resembled a child's play in many ways. I just wanted to have fun, try weird

'Silmäpako' (Eye-escape/run/hole/tear) 2020, bobbin lace in linen cord, jute rope and cork saturated with a mixture of tar and turpentine. Photo: Essi Miettinen





Pilvilinnanväylä / Flight of Fancy 2015 & 2020, bobbin lace in jute rope saturated with a mixture of tar and turpentine. Photo: Tarmo Thorström

things and amuse myself. This led me, for example, to making hammocks of thick jute thread. Why? Just to see if it worked of course!

My driving force has been to try experimenting with different approaches and ideas in bobbin lace. In 2014 I became interested in making three-dimensional forms. Many times, they are made of two-dimensional pieces that are sewn together, just like making clothes. I didn't want seams in the lace, so I figured that if I could use a 3D shaped mould and make the lace directly on the surface of the mould, then as an end result the lace would be three-dimensional right away. The first work with this technique I made of my own face in the form of a relief. The "Heritage" depicts the dialogue between my lace roots and the contemporary way I work.

Lately I've been interested in large-scale materials. As bobbin lace evolved around small scale materials I needed to reinvent the tools and techniques in order to make it into an XXL format. This has become a never ending adventure that I enjoy a lot. Thanks to internet I can also learn from others and share my knowledge too. This is essential as well.

One of my aims is to help bobbin lace keep up with the times. I value traditions and nowadays I also like making traditional works, but if we stick only with the past, bobbin lace will have the same destiny as the dinosaurs.

Biography

Tarmo Thorström (born 1983) is a lace artist who is known as both a torchbearer and a reformer of the traditional bobbin lace making in Rauma, Finland. Respecting the past, he shapes lace and lacemaking into new forms using atypical materials, scales and subjects.

His applied lacemaking has led him to develop the methods and tools into contemporary use. Thorström's main technique is bobbin lace making, but in his hands lace gets other forms such as light projections, wood cuttings, paintings and animations.

By education he is a primary school teacher (Master of Education) and a master craftsman. In 2019 he published a book *Moderni pitsinnypläys* (Contemporary bobbin lace), where he shares his findings.

[Tarmo's Instagram](#)



April Dauscha

My love affair with lace started just over 10 years ago. Throughout those years, I have become captivated by a number of lacemaking techniques and have remained enchanted by the powerful symbolism of this seductive material. It has captured my imagination and has fed me with enough curiosity for a lifetime – after all these years I am still completely enamored and devoted to lace.

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Perpetual Adoration 2012, Video 00:02:26

First, I should confess. I am in no way a “master” lacemaker, instead I like to “play” with lace. I’ve dabbled in netting techniques, and I have tried my hand in bobbin lacemaking, but I have mostly been drawn to needle lace techniques - those that closely resemble embroidery. With a background in fashion design, I have always been most comfortable with a needle and thread in hand, and thus I

especially enjoy Teneriffe lace making, needle-run lace, and Reticella work. At the heart of it, I am just an advocate and an admirer of lace. This fruitful relationship truly hinges on my fascination with lace's compelling symbolism. Lace has given a voice and a form to my ideas because, as a medium, it is so ripe with metaphor.

At first glance, lace's only purpose is to be beautiful – purely form over function. Historically, this frivolous material was meant to show one's wealth and social status. It has been viewed in fashion as both dapper and feminine, finding its way on the most affluent men and women over the centuries - a sort of ornamental overindulgence. Though meant to embellish the rich, lace found a place even on the clothing and in the homes of the working class - so long as they abided by the strict sumptuary laws of the time. All across Europe, lacemaking was a steady stream of revenue – often becoming the main source of income for many European women and thus starting its strong associations with “women's work.” Lace is like an aesthetic currency – whether its extravagant or simple, luxurious or humble, its beauty is ultimately meant to mark someone or something as valuable.

In the Catholic faith, lace is meant to symbolize the beauty of Heaven. White linens, altar cloths, and lace become symbols of purity and

chastity. Lace is used throughout the Church's sacramental rituals – they are worn by both priests and parishioners, especially during rites of passage. Lace dons the most sacred of objects during any Catholic ritual – on an infant's baptismal gown, a woman's wedding dress, a priest's alb, a girl's mantilla, or atop the altars, the tabernacle, and the chalice, all which hold the Body of Christ. It is a consecrated material meant to connect us to the divine.

In contrast, lace is also inherently sensual. It becomes a powerful symbol of seduction and sexuality with its ties to women's lingerie. A female's unmentionables are meant to stay hidden, discovered only during an accidental drape in one's dress, or during an intimate exchange of bodies. For over a century, lace has concealed a woman's body, while also playfully revealing areas that are associated with sexual pleasure. Lace is meant to tease, arouse, and capture one's gaze.

Whether used in the church, or on our bodies, ultimately, lace becomes associated with a longing for unattainable beauty.

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Above left: **Examination of Conscience** (series), 2011, Archival pigment prints, 18" x 24" (each)

Above right: **Communion**, 2014, Archival pigment print, 48" x 60"

Below: **Cerement**, 2019, Archival Pigment Print, 19" x 34.5"



Artist Statement

My work uses my body and personal narrative to investigate ideas of loss, death, and separation. As an artist, I am influenced by costume history, traditional Catholic rituals, Victorian literature, and the history of early photography. These sources support my interests in the questions of morality, transformation, penance, and communication through dress. In my work, I choose feminine objects and materials such as lace, veils, undergarments, and hair, as symbols that speak to my experience as both a woman and a mother, they become physical representations of mourning, sorrow, and maternal sacrifice.

In work like, Examination of Conscience, the pieces of handmade lace and my own body become props for a fictional ritual captured through intimate, voyeuristic, and documentary-style photographs.

In my video series, Custody of the Tongue, I go between the delicacy of handcrafting a miniature piece of needle lace, to the vulgarity of wrapping a lacemaking thread tightly around my own tongue, or shoving hair into my mouth – I create a visual tension by having two unexpected objects meet. Just like in my photograph, Communion, it becomes a symbolic gesture of sin, confession, and atonement.

My latest body of work mostly uses materials that mark the passage of time - hair, veiling, corsage pins, historical garments, and family heirlooms – they are materials that are commonly associated with rites of passage. In my photograph, Cerement, my body comes into direct contact with an ancestral lace object that functions as a relic – it covers and shrouds a faceless form - it becomes a ritual or an interaction of the living with the deceased.



Custody of the Tongue (veiling) 2013, Video 00:02:28

Biography

Born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, April Dauscha, received her BFA in fashion design at the International Academy of Design and Technology and her MFA in fiber from Virginia Commonwealth University.

April is on the board of directors for the Surface Design Association (SDA) and is one of the founding members of Tiger Strikes Asteroid Greenville (TSA GVL). She has been represented by Page Bond Gallery in Richmond, Virginia and has recently exhibited as part of the Uneasy Beauty: Discomfort in

Contemporary Adornment exhibition at the Fuller Craft Museum and as part of the, Adornment: Beauty in Excess at the Walton Arts Center. Her work has also been featured on art blogs such as Beautiful Decay, Ignant and Issue No.206.

She is currently spearheading a brand-new fiber arts program as instructor and area head at the Fine Arts Center in Greenville, South Carolina.

[April's website](#)

Maggie Hensel Brown

Needle lace has become my way of making sense of the world. There is nothing quite like the slow, methodical concentration that occurs while manipulating the needle into precise knots and stitches.

I have always leaned toward obsessive craft practices. The smaller and more intensely detailed the better. Here is a clear memory from primary school that paints the picture:

One of my teachers, recognizing my absolute need to learn new handcraft techniques, taught me a simple bookbinding method. I was completely entranced. Just a few pieces of paper, with some card and some thread, could result in a perfect little book. I went home that afternoon and settled in to make a stack of books with a whole ream of printing paper. Over the next few days, I started tearing the pages in half, then quarters, then eighths, sixteenths, thirty-secondths, and so on. The books shrank to completely unusable sizes, a single mark with a ballpoint pen would fill a whole page, but I couldn't get enough. Eventually I made what I called a "Matchbox Library," an actual matchbox, painted to look like a tiny room, and filled with multi-coloured books.

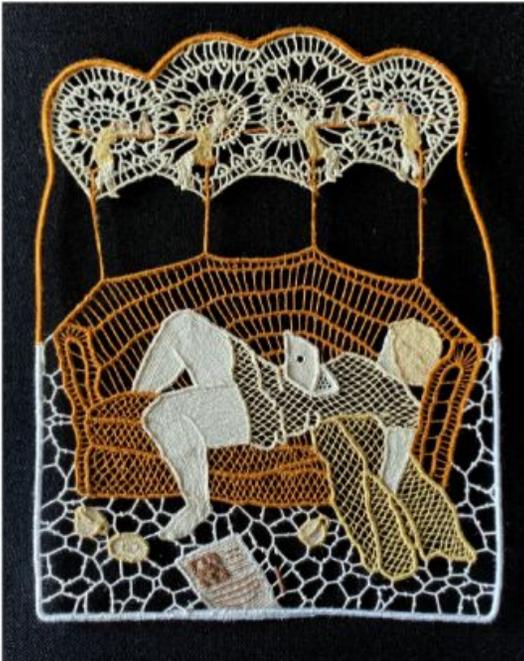
Recently, when I was sorting through some boxes at my mother's house, I found the old matchbox library and felt it explained some

deeply entrenched things about my own personality: An absolute love of technique, combined with a deep need for creativity, mixed with an obsessive streak about a mile wide.

Lacemaking is the only technique I have discovered in my adult life that ticks all of those boxes. By its very nature it is intricately detailed, and there is always the possibility of intensifying it. It can be made smaller, larger, more ornate, multi-layered, sculptural, traditional or non-traditional.

On top of that, there are countless histories to be learned from each specific technique. I have found myself listening in awe to stories of entire Irish towns kept financially afloat by their lacemaking communities during the famine, or small Italian coastal villages making laces inspired by the patterns in their fishing nets.

This sense of storytelling deepened when looking at pictorial pieces of lace. Needle lace in particular has the capacity to include forms and figures that tell stories in themselves. A quick google search can throw up some of the most incredible lace images illustrating all kinds of grand stories. The biblical tale of Judith beheading Holofernes appears in a variety of pieces around the world, as does the story of Artemis, the Grecian hunting goddess.





It's Nothing Really Detail
Untitled (Covid floor) Detail

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 Top:

Staring Into The Void: Not Hungry, Just Bored 2017
Quarantine Self Portrait II: Dreaming Of The Pub 2020
Quarantine Self Portrait: Lying, Scrolling 2020

Bottom:

Self Portrait at 28, 2018
It's Nothing Really 2019
Caving To Temptation 2018. Silk needle lace

Photos: Maggie Hensel-Brown



This sense of storytelling deepened when looking at pictorial pieces of lace. Needle lace in particular has the capacity to include forms and figures that tell stories in themselves. A quick google search can throw up some of the most incredible lace images illustrating all kinds of grand stories. The biblical tale of Judith beheading Holofernes appears in a variety of pieces around the world, as does the story of Artemis, the Grecian hunting goddess.

I have spent hours, maybe even days, trawling through these images on my laptop. The capacity to tell stories in a small piece of lace will never cease to amaze me.

My own lace works have been inspired by these pieces, with one key difference. While the stories told in historical pieces tend to be grandiose and epic, my stories describe quieter, smaller moments from contemporary life.

My own life is often delightfully mundane. I'm a single woman living in a share house in suburban



Untitled (Covid Floor) 2020, Silk Needle Lace, 18x25cm
Photo: Maggie Hensel-Brown

Sydney, reading books, watching tv, drinking wine (probably a bit too frequently), cooking and cleaning (probably not frequently enough), working boring day jobs, and just generally existing.

I often find that the specifics of life make the most relatable stories. These are the moments I try to recreate in my lace. The act of staring into the fridge, not out of hunger but out of boredom, or getting high on the beach while avoiding my family, or lying in bed and scrolling endlessly on the phone. By laboring over these

little moments I think of myself giving them the same care, thought, and attention that was given to those grand biblical tales.

Once I started seeing the world through this lens, moments would present themselves to me to be made into lace pieces.

When I was going through a long period of hedonism and contentment, I found myself using symbols and words that summed it up, (wine, books, birds and summer fruits), and combining them into an homage to that time.



Ollie and I have made 100 instagram videos 2017, needle lace
Photo: Maggie Hensel-Brown

Shortly afterward, when that period began to sour, the symbols of my discontent (coffee, crosswords and sex), turned into a piece that described my state of mind and made sense of the mess. Later, in the dwindling days of the Sydney Coronavirus lockdown, I found myself apathetically staring at my clothes strewn across the floor, and seemingly, in front of my eyes, they structured themselves into a lace pattern.

Since I've been viewing the world through lace, life seems more precious. Like the matchbox library all those years ago, the sheer scope of the detail and creative possibility continues to amaze me. Lace making slows the world down, celebrates the smallest moments, and brings beauty into the everyday. I appreciate it more with every stitch.

Biography

Maggie Hensel-Brown began learning Reticella, needle lace 2015. She then studied other lacemaking techniques in sewing circles in Italy and England.

Her pictorial laceworks tell stories of contemporary life; often depicting anger, frustration, loneliness and small moments of joy, each built up from tiny stitches in silk, bringing needle lace into the 21st century.

[Maggie's website](#)

Kathryn Harris

My current artwork all starts with a single flexible line in space. Freed from the sketchbook, the gessoed canvas, the cloth or the paper backing, my lines can be executed in 3 dimensions, literally “punto in aria” or “stitches in the air.” The lace stitches build upon themselves to create airy open vessels.

The classic book, Encyclopedia of Needlework by Therese de Dillmont, first stirred my interest in the art of lace making. Drawn to the lines in the needle lace drawings, I challenged myself to see if I could execute the stitches without a backing. Hence, I am virtually self-taught in lacemaking; this book has been my only instruction.

When I was a child, I was taught by my seamstress mother to make a button loop for a button on a bodice. For some inexplicable reason I fell in love with that simple technique, the buttonhole stitch. Thus, when I discovered needle-made laces in the Dillmont book, I was immediately doubly entranced.





As an artist, I believe that over time we all develop an inherent feel for the medium that suits us. I have learned that I particularly love low tech, lap work; work that is clean, neat and easy to put down and pick up again. While I love to collect pottery, I loathed the muck of working in that medium!

I prefer working on a petite scale, which of course also makes lacework a perfect technique for me. My materials and tools are easily available, and I can carry all of them in a small tin. Longing to work in 3- dimensions however, I have drawn on my previous knowledge of basket making to work out the particulars.

The process is additive and much like sculpting, pottery building without the mess! I start without a plan, merely choosing a color, snipping my cord and beginning the button. I make decisions on pattern and form as the piece grows. The process is satisfyingly meditative and as the rhythm of the work is established my hands quickly begin to achieve even-sized stitches.

Inspired by the great painter Giorgio Morandi, I find small groupings of vessels especially calming and satisfying.

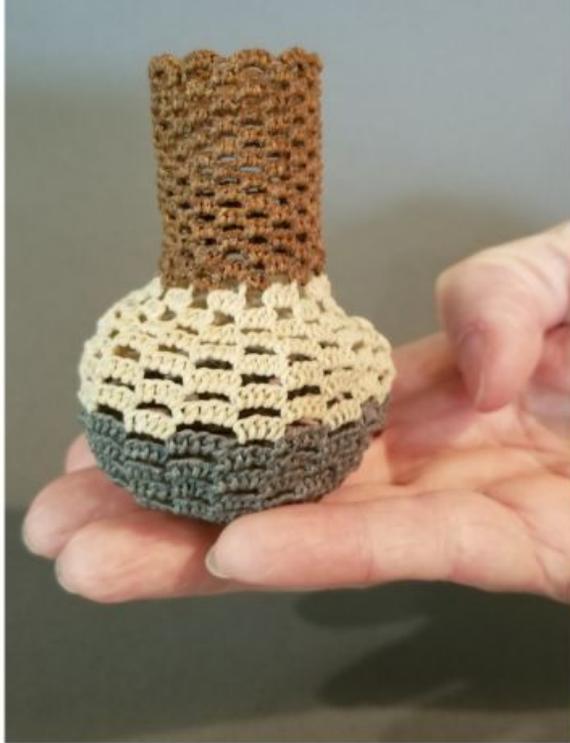


Still lives bring stillness for me, a timelessness that I crave. Vessels are classic, ancient forms and while inanimate, without their purpose they become sculptural objects.

I remain in awe of antique lace. It is hard to believe that such ethereal beauty on such a miniscule scale was created by the human hand. The many hands, simple threads and immeasurable hours of work created such magnificence. However, I am well aware that if lacework does not continue to be reinvented and reinvigorated, the inventive technology of lacework will die out completely. By executing the stitches in a 3-dimensional format I hope that I have added to that continuing exploration of such a glorious and time-honored field.



Even though the lace domain needs to move forward, it is interesting to note that modern technology can be useful in that effort. Project Gutenberg, an online library, provides access to more than 50,000 free eBooks. It includes both fictional and non-fictional works, those that are no longer under copyright. Many excellent craft books are available to read, download or print out, including my favorite book by Dillmont that I mentioned above. Standing on the shoulders of the past mistresses of the lace realm, modern practitioners can find much inspiration perusing the past triumphs and techniques included therein.



Photos courtesy of the artist

Biography

Involved in the fiber field for over 40 years, Kathryn began as an educator in 1985, working at The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising. She previously worked at the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Kathryn holds an MFA degree and a degree in Art History. Her sculptural fiber work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. It has been documented in publications such as *The Art of Beadwork* by Valerie Hector and two books by Arline Fisch, *Crocheted Wire Jewelry* and *Textile Techniques in Metal*. She headed the Fiber Studies program in the Art Department at San Diego State University, teaching classes in Fiber Construction and Surface Design until retiring from the University in 2012.

Kathryn explores the delicate tracery of lace work in vessel forms, building on techniques discovered in old textile books. She also produces a separate body of work that explores pure geometric forms in space, using bugle beads and steel cable. Because of her love of teaching, she is able to share her knowledge in workshops and lectures on many different aspects of the fiber field. She resides in San Diego, California, USA.

[Kathryn's Instagram](#)

Kim Lieberman

WILD GROUND WILD LACE WILD THOUGHT

"Throughout the lace making body of works Lieberman has made since 2006 she has favored Wild Ground (Chaotic Ground). The reason being twofold, the pattern for this is less apparent than a regular pattern – it is 'wilder'. When making the lace if not pinned constantly one is able to pull on the bobbins and the whole piece moves which allows for a dynamic or wilder look than a pattern that is regular. This feeds into the concept of "Wild". Wild thought, as Lieberman sees it, is when someone is able to think without boundaries or convention. When thought and understanding of the world we live in is not constricted to expectation.

With using wild ground in a collar that will 'frame the face' the concepts of freedom of thought are acknowledged. Wild can also allude to action in so far as action that is brave, dynamic and ethical, against all odds."

Excerpt from the certificate of authenticity sent to RBG with a handmade lace collar 2018

I came to lace making from a world external to the lace world – the art world.

I wanted to express a concept out of thread that required the thread to travel through the air, be suspended. In a chaotic, dynamic pattern.

I was not unfamiliar to thread. I had actually learnt to sew by the time I was six, so thread had always been in my life. But including it in my art happened in 1999, I was well into the artworld by then, having completed a degree and working on a masters. I had already had two solo shows and been on group exhibitions both nationally (South Africa) and internationally.

In 1999 I was on a fellowship in New York and a button fell off my leather jacket, so I went into a intense, packed, 80 year old haberdashery and bought some silk thread to sew it back on. When I got back to the apartment I put the thread down on the blank perforated postage stamp paper I used in my work and the idea to thread through the perforations flashed through my mind. This was the beginning of a body of works that I made for years, and my relationship to thread.



In 1996 in a scrap metal yard in Cape Town I had found old bronze moulds for dolls. They were headless, which suited me perfectly as I am interested in the breaking of boundaries. How we do not end in our skin. That there is information of all sorts that flows between us. Emotion, thoughts, ideas and understanding to name a few. It's that thing that happens when we walk into a crowded room (in the olden days before Covid) and know that we will like someone across the room that we have never met, there will be some people in that room that our thoughts, interest, attraction will tag onto. All of that happens in the ether between us.

I wanted to use these bronze figures as representations of us as humans, they were so bashed with life and beautifully patinaed. And then I sought to find an expression of that much milder substance that is invisible, yet so felt, that goes between us.

So in 2007 when I finally got the idea to make circles with thread it was part of my protocol, part of the way I thought, and a natural step in the direction of lace making.

I didn't know much about lace, I was aware there was a lace guild as when I was doing my masters at Wits University there was another student working with lace making (hair...blood), and she was part of the guild. I walked into a haberdashery in Johannesburg and scribbled a

chaotic pattern of what I wanted to do with thread and the woman told me that that was lace making.

So I tracked down the Lace Guild and they gave me, what became, my lace teacher's name. Janis Savage. When I met her soon after and explained my intentions she was up for the challenge. Chaotic Ground, or Wild Ground as it is also called was new in the world of lace. She said she had actually only come across it a few months earlier and was willing to try. So I started off learning some basic lace just so I could get an understanding of the skill. Around the same time we started designing the pricking I needed to follow my idea to make lace circles to fit on the round necks of the headless dolls.*

*At no point during the years we made these circles did I see them as collars. These were for me just an energetic output of a person's path, the current they created that rippled out from them and engaged, impacted, or influenced. The interest in collars and why people frame the head, came much later in 2015.

In 2008 I had an exhibition Human Constellations which had 18 of these figures, with chaotic lace circles, placed across the gallery far enough away from each other to allow space for the viewer to walk but still obviously in commune. There were also other

works which used Eight Thread Amure, Rose Ground, Linen Stitch, Torchon Ground, and numerous other grounds. By the time of this show I was deeply invested in lace making.

I had learnt, through Janis, the history of lace, the politics, economics, societal meaning. And understood by then it is not a simple craft, not a shallow craft, it has rigor and depth. This understanding came to influence other works

such as 'Why the collar?' Which is also called "Who's head are we framing now, here in Africa?" This work looks at the European sumptuary laws in the 1600s and 1700s. It was illegal for peasants to wear lace. Only royalty could.

Tribe 2011, Handmade blood red lace, bronze figures
109 x 100 x 100 cm. Photo: Wayne Oosthuizen





I am interested in the concept of royalty, in that it should represent true leadership. To me this means true values, true ethics, true morals.

And then what follows is true royalty would not have to be from a bloodline. As a concept then, royalty would be people, from wherever they came, that had these qualities or characteristics. We obviously have seen this type of grace in certain leaders here, in South Africa including Mandela, Thuli Madonsela, Yvonne Mokgoro, Albie Sachs... So for all intents and purposes I have used this concept of royalty for my own means - to frame the heads of those here in Africa with handmade or antique lace collars.

In 2018 I was in a mud bath on the island of Vulcano and met an American woman who told me of Ruth Bader Ginsberg's relationship to lace collars. How she wore them as political and feminist statement. So similar to the intention in the "Why the collar?" works, yet she was actually wearing lace collars with intent. I immediately started thinking of ways to make, and get, a collar to her. It was obvious to me that I would use wild ground as the concepts I had imbued it this lace pattern for years was a perfect conceptual fit for this woman who had managed to shift many areas in a society over decades - with a focus on gender equality.



Kim finishing the last lace circle for the SBRC 2019.
Photo courtesy of the artist

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Kim Lieberman, Portrait 2020. Photo: Bernard Brand

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Territories | Sky
Flight Territories
Night Territories
Clouded Territories
It's part breath

2020, Silk handmade Chaotic Ground lace, International currency.

Photo courtesy of the artist

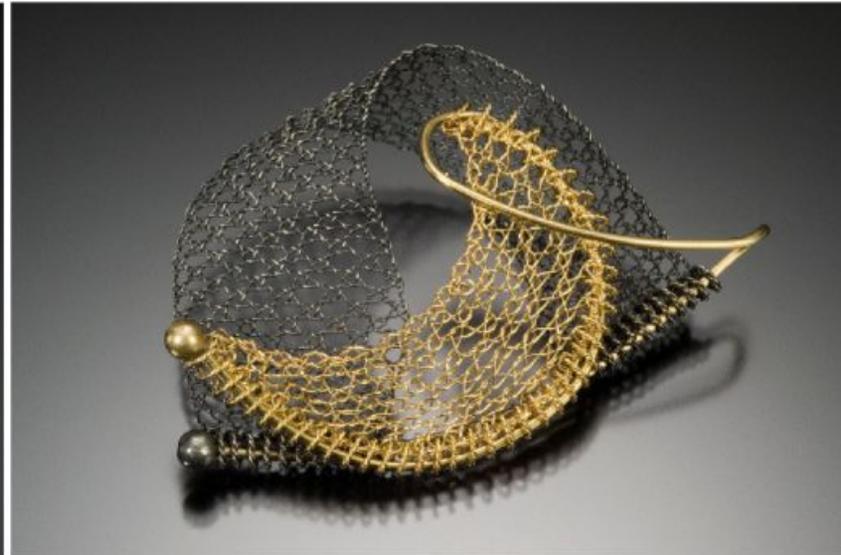
On return to South Africa I emailed Albie Sachs the famous anti Apartheid activist turned constitutional court judge, who I had come to know through the artworks collection of the South African Constitutional Court, which he had instigated and grown. Albie immediately returned my email saying he had a special relationship with RBG and over the years they had met, he was going to Washington DC and would personally take it to her – which he did on 13 November 2018.

Biography

Kim Lieberman is a contemporary conceptual artist living and working in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Lieberman did her undergraduate degree at Wits Tech, and her MAFA at Wits University. She has had eight solo exhibitions Johannesburg | Cape Town | New York. And has been in group exhibitions all over South Africa, New York, and other parts of the USA, Italy, Sydney (LoveLace exhibition PowerHouse Museum).

[Kim's website](#)



Lauran Sundin

As makers we have a choice in what terminology we want to use to talk about our work. Having an art background, I have the vocabulary of different art movements which I can use in describing my work. Although my lace jewelry is based on an age old technique, my interpretation of how to use that technique to create contemporary dimensional jewelry is more akin to visual elements of early 20th century modern art and contemporary schools of art where geometric, linear and negative space are key elements.

Woven Waves 18ct yellow gold, oxidized sterling silver, pearls, hematite. Photo: Berlian Arts

Captured Crescent 18ct yellow gold, oxidized sterling silver. Photo: Berlian Arts

In explaining our work, we need to first understand what inspires us. We are drawn by a need to expound on and demonstrate those aspects of what inspires us. It is in filling this need to expound that a piece comes to realization. I am inspired by the traditions of Japanese beauty. This analysis is multi-level. First, there is an analysis of the physical making of the product itself, second, the meaning behind the piece's physical attributes and third, assessment of the cultural impact of that product. As a contemporary artist basing my

work on principles of Japanese art and culture as opposed to replicating an historical aesthetic, I can choose to base my work on those principles which have meaning to me.

Beauty: Simply stated, I love making beautiful things. I believe that beauty influences the quality of our lives, it feeds our souls. In breaking down what is beautiful the Japanese have, I think, more words to express and explain it than any other culture. In all aspects of traditional Japanese life, it was paramount. I use these words to not only explain my finished work but use them as guiding principles in the designing and physical making of my pieces.

Beauty in the making: What we would term focus in the west has a deeper meaning when applied to the making of an object in Japan. It is a total involvement with the physical movements, and a complete control and empathy for the material to the point of meditation. The precision required in the physical manipulation of the bobbins and the high level of attention affords me this level of tranquility.

In integrity of design: I look to the honesty of structure in Japanese form where elements of support become an integral part of the design and complement it rather than distracting from it. "If it needs to be there – make it part of the design" is a creed of my friend Jana Novak's

work which I have taken to heart. We see this in traditional Japanese architecture where the wall supports, and rafters meticulously constructed, become part of the whole.

In simplicity: Although my work is extremely complex in the design process and physical movements to achieve precision, the results are tranquil and simple which leads to elegance which to me is beauty in minimalism.

In Contrast: Visual contrast in the form of light vs. dark adds another layer of interest. I oxidize, darken my silver, to varying shades of dark grey. These darkened areas contrast with the bright gold thus toning down the bright reflections of light off the gold making it more subtle but at the same time not detracting from the preciousness of the gold. I liken this aspect of the shimmering gold of traditional folding screens which were gilded and painted with ink. They too had this subdued appearance when seen in shadows.

In repetition: Repetition in elements cause a rhythm (we know this in music with the opening of Beethoven's 5th symphony). This tempo and rhythm give my work a sense of harmony and unity by repeating the same elements but with an extremely important attention to variations in order to add interest.



Two Become One 2010
18ct yellow gold, oxidized sterling silver,
stainless steel, pearls.
Photo: Berlian Arts

This rhythmic repetition leads me to spaces of rest (in Japanese called 'Ma') - not just empty or negative space in the western sense but an intentional void in space and time in which to contemplate. In my work there are several areas of open space. The spaces surrounding the stitches within the lace itself are carefully calculated to accommodate the desired shape. Exchanging layers in the lace creates open areas of hollowed out spaces. Open areas become more complex as my pieces are mini - sculptures and are not meant to be viewed straight on but must be interesting and hold attention from varying viewpoints. Taken literally a step further. I want my jewelry to be interesting when seen from a distance – across a room, from across a diner table, closeup in one to one conversation and on very close inspection to appreciate the finer details. All of these viewing distances involve the use of Ma – the space surrounding it.

All these elements of beauty combine to make fully cohesive pieces that hopefully add beauty to the world.

Biography

Lauran's roots in England and Scotland engendered reverence for the traditional fiber crafts. Born in Rhode Island, USA, her childhood in history-rich New England helped cement core values that her artwork would respect the past. Teenage years in California exposed her to contemporary design and Japanese-style open-plan living, leading her to explore Japanese culture.

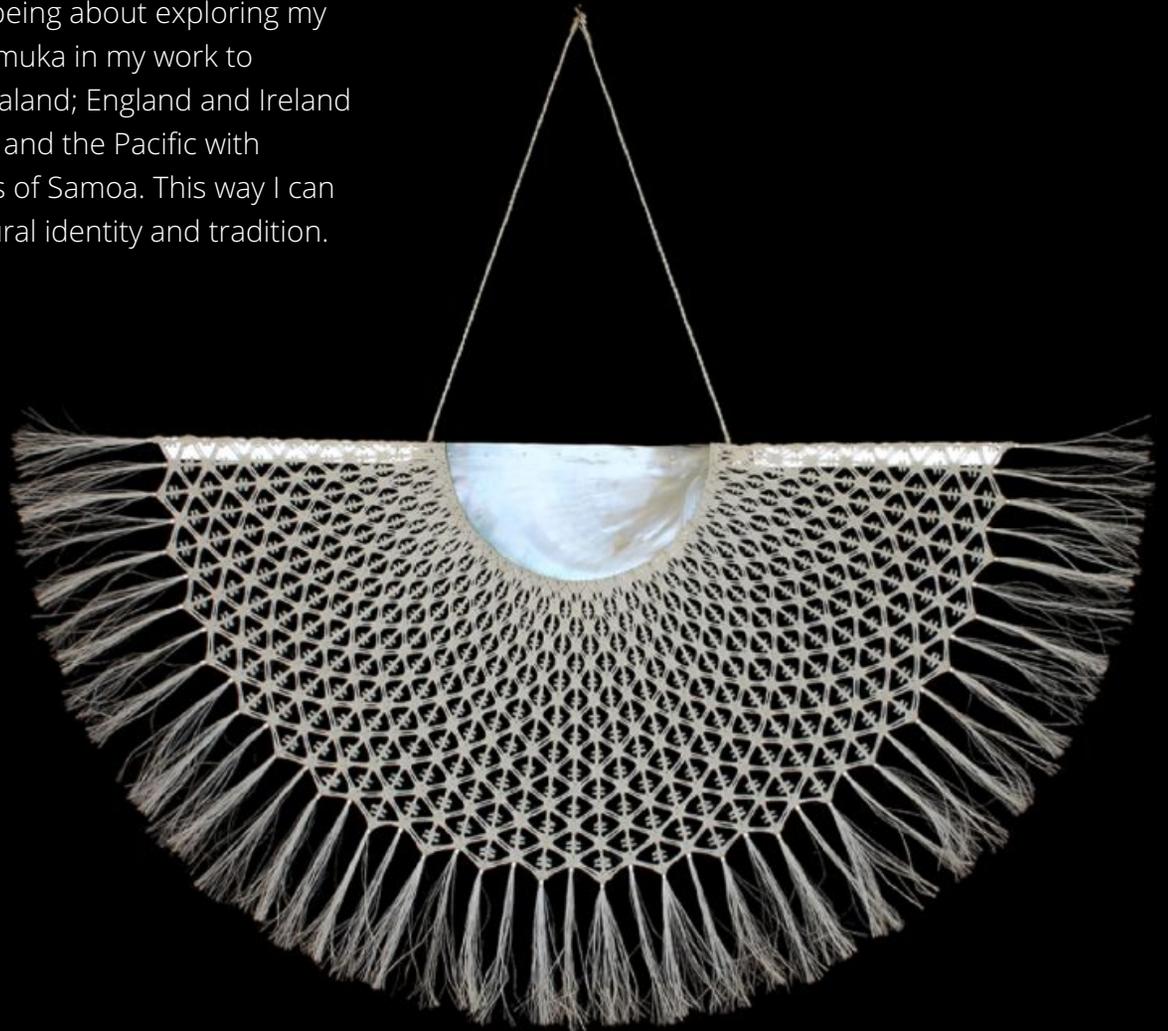
She studied Japanese textiles at the University of Hawaii. There she came to understand that a piece of artwork, however complex in its design and execution could be simple and elegant. The limitations of loom weaving led her to seek other techniques, particularly off-loom. Her pursuits took her to Guatemala, where she studied dimensional overshot back strap weaving and to Japan studying Kumihimo braiding. Eventually, she was led to traditional bobbin lace making and studied modern interpretations of the technique in Denmark coming to realize that the technique allowed her to actually “weave in any direction”.

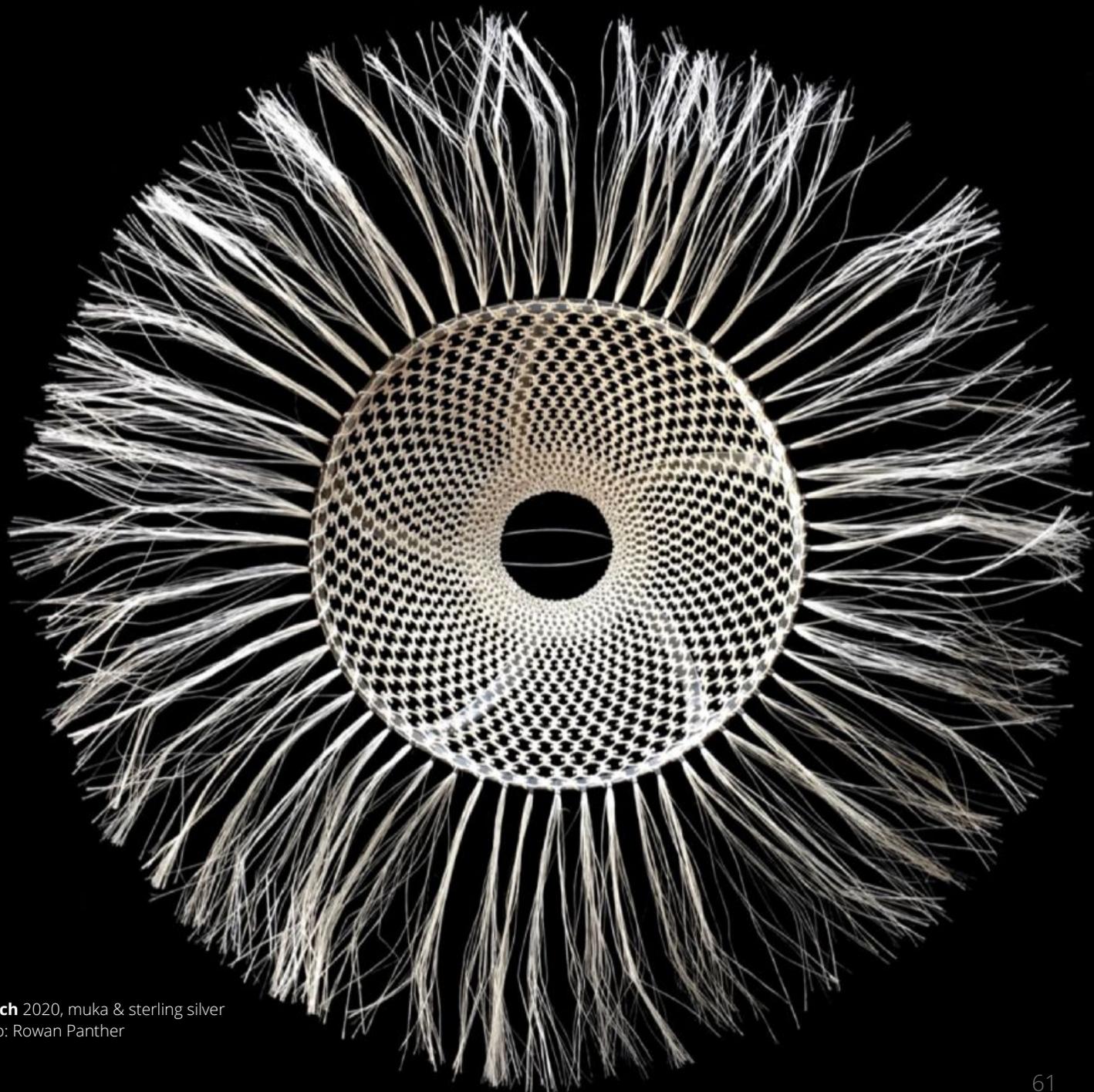
[Lauran's website](#)

Rowan Panther

Coming from New Zealand, which is such a multi-cultural place from where so many of us don't originate, sometimes it's hard to know where you fit into the big picture. This has led to a lot of my work being about exploring my own heritage. I use muka in my work to incorporate New Zealand; England and Ireland with lace patterning and the Pacific with materials and motifs of Samoa. This way I can create my own cultural identity and tradition.

Placeholder 2017, muka & sterling silver
Photo: Rowan Panther





Brooch 2020, muka & sterling silver
Photo: Rowan Panther

Lei 2017, muka & sterling silver
Photo: Rowan Panther

Biography

Panther connects to and explores her Irish/English/Samoan heritage with the aim to produce a hybrid cultural tradition. Inspired by museum displays and social domestic history, her work is concurrently art and craft, questioning the artificial distinction between the two.

Panther has spent years refining her practice and has moved toward experimenting with wearable pieces of lace work. Her works are motivated by notions of welcome and acceptance and demonstrate a pacific interpretation of traditional lace, a northern hemisphere dominated practice. The woven pieces are made from muka, the raw filament stripped from the leaves of the Harekeke flax plant, a material with strong cultural and historical connection to Aotearoa New Zealand.

She completed a Diploma in Photography from United in 2002 and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Elam in 2008 and lives in Doubtless Bay, Northland.

[Rowan's Instagram](#)



Veronika Irvine

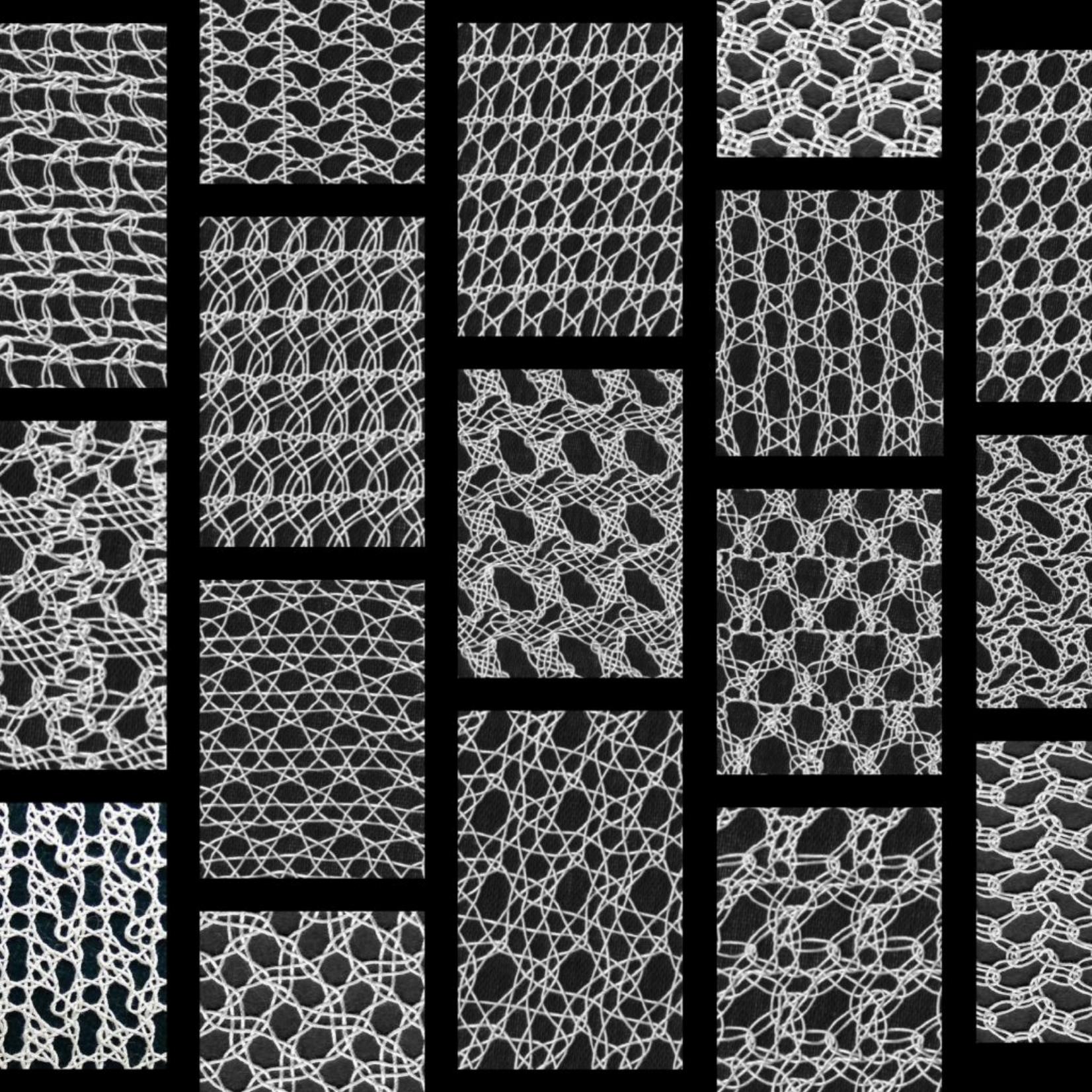
My first memorable encounter with lace occurred when I was five years old. On my mother's dresser was a small pile of tatted lace fragments, cut off from the unfinished outer ring of a doily. I spent hours trying to figure out how the pieces were supposed to connect. In some places the tiny perfect knots were falling apart, revealing more about their structure and leading me to wonder how they had been formed. Many years later, I found out that these fragments came from the last piece my grandmother had been working on when she passed away at the age of 35. While it saddens me to reflect on the reason why these pieces were not joined together, the fact that they came into my life in this unfinished, disconnected state is what attracted my attention and held my interest---I was engaged in imagining the creation process and piecing together the puzzle. This fascination with the logic behind lace has held my interest ever since.

When I started my PhD, I wanted to design visualizations that would communicate complex concepts in mathematics, similar to the work of the sadly now defunct Geometry Center at the University of Minnesota. I soon

realized that better understanding comes not through looking at a finished drawing or movie, but through the process of creating that drawing. This led me to work with high school students, exploring math through the creation of digital art. I could see, and their teachers confirmed, that the approach was extremely helpful, but it was hard to get teenagers to articulate what they were feeling and thinking and difficult to gather concrete metrics. So I turned the experiment on myself.

At the same time, I became aware of research in the field of computational origami. Using mathematical modelling, researchers like Robert Lang and Erik Demaine were working with artists to expand the limits of origami from the traditional crane and water-bomb shapes to vastly more complex forms. I took on the challenge to develop a mathematical model for bobbin lace.

As anticipated, for me bobbin lace became a powerful lens into the world of mathematics. It helped me focus and persevere when learning new concepts ranging from topology to group theory and graph theory.



My years spent making lace gave me an intuition into the properties required for the mathematical model. Though it was sometimes difficult to express those intuitions in mathematical terms and even harder to create an irrefutable proof to validate those feelings, I always knew it was possible because the evidence existed, in a very tangible form, in the lace. I proved that there are an infinite number of periodic lace ground patterns to explore and, using combinatorial search algorithms from computer, I found millions of examples, some of which appear in *Collage of Algorithmic Grounds*. I also fine tuned my search to only generate periodic patterns with kaleidoscope or gyration symmetry as shown in “Easter(n)” and “Delle Caustiche”.

Math was also a powerful lens for me into the world of lace. It helped me to generalize and

formalize many ideas I had about lace and challenge some assumptions. It also gave me the courage to design my own pieces. Just like the five-year-old looking at tatted fragments, once again I was deconstructing what was before me and looking for a logical way to reassemble it. My initial research was into the periodic symmetry of traditional lace grounds but this was merely the beginning. Having validated the mathematical model, the natural next step is to take the rules of traditional lace and see what happens when you break them. The first rule I “broke” is the periodic nature of lace grounds. As shown in A patch of nodding bur-marigold, it is possible to create a lace ground pattern that has repetition but no translation symmetry. In the future, I hope to bend other rules by working in three dimensions.

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Collage of algorithmic grounds 2014, bobbin lace, cotton thread

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Delle Caustiche (Sagittarius Star Cloud) 2017
bobbin lace, cotton thread and copper wire, 40 x 40 x 40 cm



A patch of nodding bur-marigold 2019, bobbin lace, cotton thread, 21 x 21 cm

Photos: Veronika Irvine

Biography

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by the ability to create useful and interesting objects from something as simple as yarn. My love for lace comes from my maternal grandmother who taught me to appreciate not only to the beauty of lace but also the logical puzzles that are part of the craft. I learned to tat as a child and to make bobbin lace as a young woman. I am also driven by the beauty of math and the precision and complexity possible through computer algorithms. I combined my interests for a PhD thesis in Computer Science from the University of Victoria Canada titled "Lace tessellations: a mathematical model for bobbin lace and an exhaustive combinatorial search for patterns". I received the 2015 Outstanding Paper Award from the Journal of Mathematics and the Arts for my article "Developing a Mathematical Model for Bobbin Lace" and top prize in the 2017 art exhibition of the Bridges between Math and Art conference for my sculpture "Delle Caustiche". I have participated in Lace, not Lace - Hunterdon Museum, Technically Beautiful - Carol Shen Gallery, and SpitzenART IV - Museen Burg Abenberg.

[Veronika's website](#)



Pierre Fouché

My childhood dreams of becoming an artist never once featured textiles, much less lace. When I discovered it, eventually, it was like meeting an old friend after a long time of separation - instantly familiar, as if they've never been gone from your life at all. In bobbin lace, I found the sculptural medium that suits my temperament like a skin: as if the whole of human history and ingenuity developed the technique solely for me. I am under no delusion that that is the case, but lace is, at the very least, the second last bit of a puzzle that turned an aimless wanderer into someone with a cohesive sense of self.

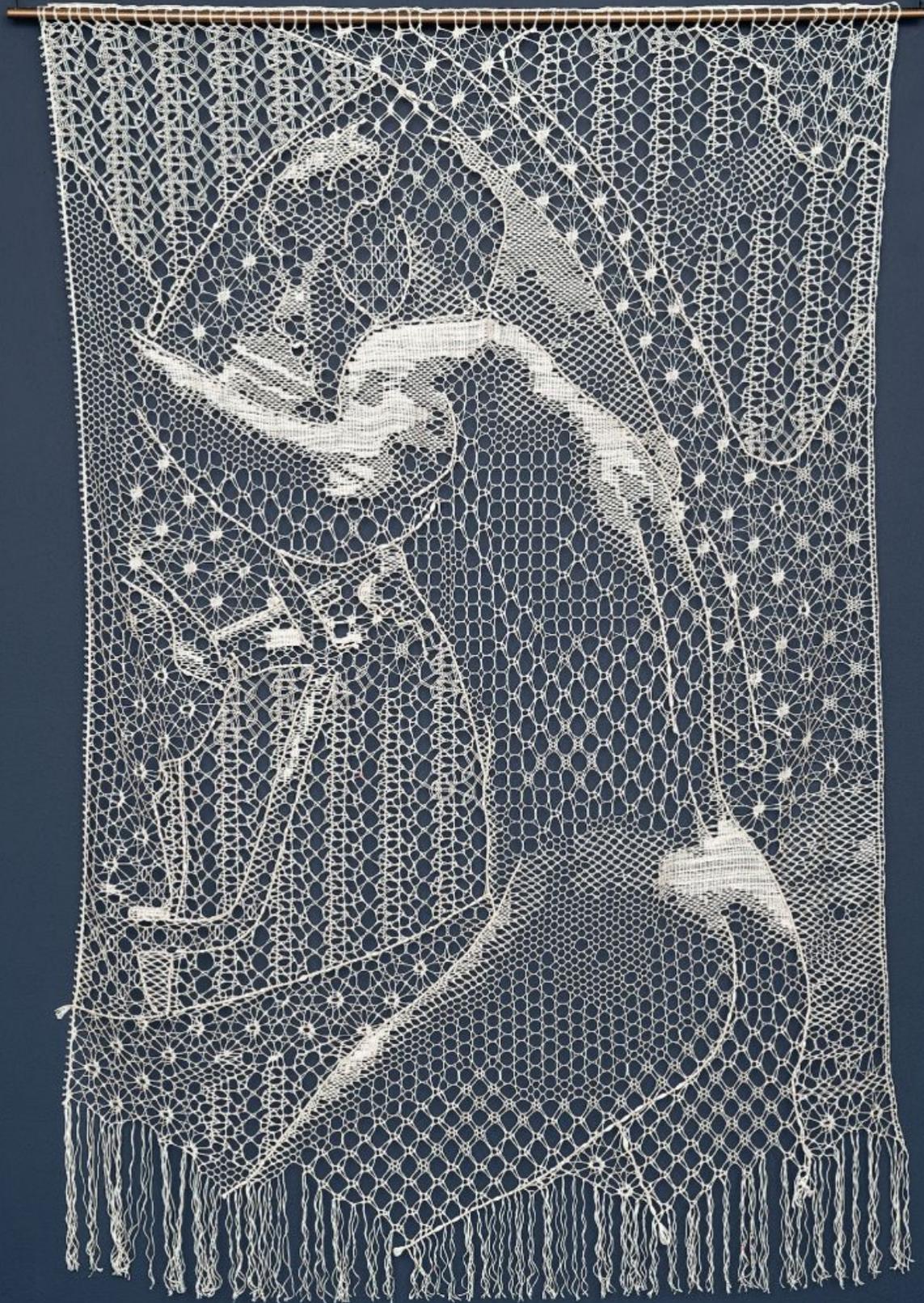
Attempting to pin down the exact qualities of lace that draws me to it made me realise that the qualities I value in good art are all present in even rather mediocre hand-made lace:

Lace is sensual. It is sensual to make and sensual to experience. The feeling of wooden bobbins briskly moving about in your hands, their wind-chime percussive sounds, threads entwining and being pulled taught in the snares of other threads and pins is utterly unique. One is not supposed to, but I relish every opportunity to touch the thread. Linen, cotton, silk, wool: each strand evokes the whole of its natural kingdom of origin. Handling the finished

lace afterwards even more so. (The mystery of the appeal of lace in lingerie, finally revealed!) Lace is sensual to view, and makers have a better appreciation for it because they know that the visual undulations, unfathomable tessellations - mesmerising by themselves - were once just strands of finely spun fibre and sticks of wood or bone.

Lace stimulates the mind. It checks an essential box of required qualities that lead to a particular pleasure from engaging in an all-consuming activity. Runners and swimmers know this feeling well. It is hard to make lace, but not so hard that you repeatedly fail at it. It is something that you can get better at with practice and the acquisition of more skills. It is an activity that engages the limbic mind through analytical problem solving and self-motivation, but also the autonomic nervous system through patterns of gestures and moves that become automatic over time with repetition. Little wonder lacemakers are generally long lived.

Lace is beautiful, and not just in the sense of adornment (a highly undervalued category of aesthetics). In contemporary lacemakers' hands, lace is maturing as an artistic medium that is versatile in expressing not just any form,



but any idea or evoking any emotion too, including the difficult-to-define one of the sublime. Lace is to textiles what poetry is to language, and it is increasingly being appreciated as such once more.

Lace is an expression of human ingenuity, and the arc of its development connects any maker of it to every other lacemaker in history. The technique evolved over hundreds of years in the hands of average lacemakers like you and me, whose small rebellions and flourishes of individuality accumulated and diversified the craft into a universe of styles and traditions. The modern lacemaker, standing on the shoulders of these giants, can cherry-pick any technique (and get a wink from some historical lacemaker, long since departed, who brought an aspect of it into being).

The final litmus test for good art, in my opinion, is something that leads to an aesthetic experience that includes goosebumps. My lace "origin story" includes a little Binche peacock, all of 4cm wide, that did exactly that in the living room of an octogenarian lacemaker's apartment in Basel over a decade ago. The tragedy of it all is that I might never achieve such humble yet graceful lines and clarity of expression in a mesh of seemingly impossible geometry, despite a lifetime's dedication. I would like to introduce two recent lace works because they illustrate two very different approaches to engaging with bobbin lace as an

art form. I gave each two titles: The first "1994.77" (or "Lebensdlängligchen Explosionsglück") - is a larger than life-size figurative panel that translated a historical photograph in point ground lace. The second work, "06.643" (or "Temporal Consciousness Access"), is a large-scale reconstruction of a length of 17th c proto-Binche lace.

The titles are the accession numbers of the museum objects that I used to reference both pieces. The original photograph of the blister gunner is in the Brooklyn Museum collection. The Binche edging is at the Ratti Textile Centre at the Metropolitan Museum, also in New York. Thus, both artworks reference objects that humanity considered worthy of preservation in its highest cultural institutions, recreated in bobbin lace, arguably one of humanity's highest textile construction achievements.

"1994.77" is made of World War II parachute chords. Real, beautiful, 5-ply heavy silk that I received as a gift from an artist friend who in turn received it as a gift from a studio visitor whose family had kept the silk from the 1940s. A medium so loaded with world and personal history is daunting: how does one honour that history in creating a work out of it without falling into traps of cliché and over-sentimentality? I nearly decided to abandon the medium until I saw Horace Briston's photograph circulating on social media. He took the picture in 1944, and not only is this



depiction of a naked blister gunner of historical relevance, but it also documented a staggeringly beautiful young man. The photograph's uncanny contemporary feel could easily be confused as a Calvin Klein underwear advertisement - it brings the subject a little closer to home. By translating the picture into bobbin lace, using a medium directly connected to the war, I hoped to highlight the absurdity of enlisting young men and sending them off to kill one another under the guise of patriotism. A disturbing rise in contemporary fascism also spurred me to embark on this piece. Made at the height of the Trump administration in the US, the work asks the viewer to remember the tragedy of the war and how easily world politics can swerve in a similar direction.

What started out as a hobby project - tracing the thread movements of a unique piece of Binche I viewed at the Ratti Centre in 2019 - turned into an obsession to "solve the puzzle". This was no easy task! Even using a high-resolution photograph I took of the original, the handspun linen is uneven and worn from lots of washing, and so densely worked that the thread movements were impossible to discern with clarity in many of the irregular snowflake motifs. One day, early in 2020, the final pair lines connected in a way that turned the crazy tracing into a workable pair diagram for a single repeat of the pattern. I knew I had to make it in rope. I had previously worked with a 6mm thick polyester three-ply rope before, but using a pattern of my own design that was very angular. With "06.642" I wanted to see how the



extreme curvilinear composition of the original linen edging would translate on a large scale).

The piece is essentially a “master copy” - a learning piece - and in that sense, it is a very personal portrait of two lacemakers: the 17th-century one who applied her skill and training to the improvisational interpretation of a pattern (no two repeats are worked the same way in the original), and the contemporary lacemaker/student, dumbfounded by the original lacemaker’s ingenuity, and utterly perplexed by some of her choices. At times I

wondered whether a couple of repeating, counterintuitive decisions signified a “Baroque world view, an idiosyncratic personality, or some form of knowledge, now obsolete or lost to history” - as my gallerist Lindsey Raymond described it in a catalogue entry for the work.

These two works represent a mere sliver of how lace can be used technically and conceptually as an art medium. How wonderful to have a craft so rich in history, varied in form and application that any tiny facet of it could become a focal point for a new creative endeavour!

Biography

Pierre Fouché (b. 1977, Pretoria) introduces himself as a lacemaker. This designation highlights his interest in the techniques, materials, histories, and social relevance of textiles. His respect for technique, tradition, and innovation has earned Fouché his place within the craft establishment as an internationally respected practitioner and teacher of contemporary bobbin lace. His penchant for arcane media and aesthetics has led his practice to include macramé, drawn thread embroidery, encaustic painting, and pinhole photography, as well as traditional painting, drawing, and printmaking.

Thematically, his work focusses on portraiture and the gaze, photography and representation, appropriation, and web-media cultures, as well as some forays into overt queer politics. Often informed by world art history, his desire to understand the machinery of contemporary visual cultures tends toward the Romantic. His consistent marriage of iconography with craftsmanship also contributes to this reading.

Fouché achieved his MA in Fine Arts from the University of Stellenbosch in 2006. In 2018 he was the featured artist of the Andorran city of Escaldes- Engordany's 12th Textile and Glass Symposium. Notable group exhibitions include Lace/not lace at the Hunterdon Art Museum in

Clinton, New Jersey; Crafted: Objects in flux at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (2018), Women's work at the Iziko South African National Gallery (2016), as well as the touring exhibition, Queer Threads: Crafting Identity and Community, first exhibited at the Leslie + Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York (2015). His work is represented in the public collections of the Iziko South African National Gallery and the Artphilein Foundation, Switzerland.

[Pierre's website](#)

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1994.77 or Lebenslänglichen Explosionsglück (Explosive Lifelong Happiness) 2020 Silk chords from a World War II parachute. 130 x 180 cm.

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The Seas and All will Part, Expire 2017-19, Acrylic cord bobbin lace with perfume accords of Tagetes Minuta (Khakibush), Lapsang Suchong, and Cape Snowbush. Diorama panel: 350 cm x 780 cm. Photo and image manipulation: Matthew Bradley.

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Brett posing for an imaginary portrait of Raymond Buys 2015 Bobbin lace and macramé in polyester braid. 265 x 140cm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

It takes a lot of teamwork and community support to make an event like this happen and there are some people to whom I wish to express my gratitude.

All the artists and makers who participated in #DFZ2021. Thank you for sharing your work so generously. Special thanks go to the 2021 tutors who all took a leap of faith with me into the world of online teaching. I am in awe of what you have all created.

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Above all a huge thank you to my husband Ignacio Querejeta, without his love and support, editing, design skills and untiring dedication to the project, DFZ would not be possible.

