

Karen Suzuki – hand stitched mixed media textile objects

Personal details

Born in Glasgow, I work from a studio in Glasgow's east end. I trained in ceramics at Glasgow School of Art (BA Hons 1993; Master of Design, MDes 1994), and practised ceramics until 2005, exhibiting widely in the UK and internationally. In 2006 I began making work using textiles, in which I am self-taught, and in October 2009 set up my company, Nameless Wonders, making smaller-scale work for craft fairs, online shops and private commissions. In late 2010 I also began making more sustained pieces of work for exhibition.

I have exhibited throughout the UK, as well as having a solo exhibition in Harajuku, Tokyo in 2011. Public commissions include a cat, pigeons and rats for the Riverside Museum (Museum of Transport) in Glasgow.

About the work

I make hand stitched textile objects that are either inspired by real animals or are ideas that just happen to emerge in animal-like form. With influences including urban wildlife, Staffordshire pottery figures and old worn toys, the work is spontaneously and intuitively made, vigorously stitched and with a rough finish.

Making techniques are simple and traditional hand processes that emphasise the hand-produced qualities. I like experimenting with colour, pattern and texture combinations, and hand stitch freely, which to me is like exploratory drawing; finding the form through needle, thread and scissors – working directly with the fabrics, and cutting, stitching and stuffing until I'm happy with the result. The very visible stitching both adds to the surface texture and is structural. Materials and process are at the heart of the approach, so I rarely pre-plan or make preliminary drawings, instead allowing each object to emerge with as little control from me as possible, the result of each action suggesting the direction that the next will take. Working this way I hope produces objects with irregular character and a fragile, lived-in, or edgy vitality, depending on the subject.

Contact

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W <http://namelesswonders.jimdofree.com>

Etsy shop www.etsy.com/shop/namelesswonders

Crafts Council Directory www.craftscouncil.org.uk/directory/maker/nameless-wonders/

Facebook www.facebook.com/namelesswonders-karensuzuki/

Twitter @bunnvamp

Instagram @karensuzuki2779

Recent exhibitions

2014	Dovecot Studios/Craft Scotland exhibition, <i>Selected 2014</i>
2014-15	Unit Twelve, Staffordshire, <i>Contemporary Craft Open</i>
2015	Whitehouse Gallery, Kirkcudbright, <i>Colour</i> themed exhibition
2015	Sofa & Stuff Showroom, <i>Animals</i> , Woodchester (SIT Select Spring Festival)
2015	<i>Original Tweets</i> , Roger Billcliffe Fine Art, Glasgow
2015	<i>Crafted for Christmas</i> , New Brewery Arts, Cirencester
2015	<i>Winter Design</i> , Roger Billcliffe Fine Art, Glasgow
2016	<i>...by a thread...</i> Gawthorpe Hall, Lancashire
2016	<i>Makers Market</i> , Oriol Myddrin Gallery, Carmarthen
2016	<i>Alternative Giving</i> , Barony Centre, West Kilbride, North Ayrshire

- 2017 *Off the Wall*, An Tobar, Isle of Mull, Scotland
- 2017 *Myths & Legends*, Craft in the Bay Summer Show 2017, Cardiff
- 2017 *Makers Market*, Oriol Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen
- 2017 *Dark Elegance*, Platform Gallery, Clitheroe
- 2017 *Re:Evolution*, An Tobar, Tobermory, Mull
- 2018 *Can't Take My Eyes Off You*, Project Ability, Glasgow
- 2019 *Into the Woods*, Unit Twelve, Staffordshire
- 2019 *Y Bwrdd//The Table*, Oriol Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen

Previous selling events

- Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair, Manchester
- Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair, Sheffield
- Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair, Newcastle
- Made by Hand, Cheltenham (now Craft Festival)
- Edinburgh West End Fair
- February 2017 American Craft Council Baltimore Show, with Craft Scotland

Public commissions

- 2011 One large cat, two pigeons and two rats for the Riverside Museum (Museum of Transport) in Glasgow.
- 2014 Two fighting cockerels for Bilston Gallery, Wolverhampton
- 2017 Commission for An Tobar, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, based on my residency there.
- 2019 Lobster, for Oriol Myrddin Gallery exhibition *Y Bwrdd//The Table*

Other

- 2012 Invited speaker at textiles symposium, *Cutting Through Time*, Collins Gallery, Glasgow, February
- 2015 Invited speaker at Embroiderers' Guild, Prestwick, Ayrshire, November
- 2017 Invited speaker at Embroiderers' Guild, Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire
- 2017 An Tobar, Tobermory, Mull. Mini residency of one week to collect information for a commissioned piece and deliver a workshop
- 2018 Crafts Council Maker of the Week, 9 February
- 2018 CBeebies: *Junk Rescue*, screening from 18 June on BBC. I was one of the makers featured in this series introducing young children to making things from recycled and salvaged materials.

Publications

- Feature and front cover: *Embroidery* magazine, July/August 2016 edition
- Featured: *Textile Nature* (Anne Kelly, Batsford, July 2016)
- Featured: *Through Our Hands* magazine, November 2014
- Featured: *Contemporary Appliqué* (Julia Triston and Rachel Lombard, Batsford, 2014)
- Featured in *Homes and Interiors Scotland* magazine, March 2014
- Interview: *Inside Crochet* magazine, January 2013

Awards

- 2015 Award from *Embroidery* magazine, at Unit Twelve *Contemporary Craft Open*
- 2019 Manchester Art Gallery Showcase Award, at Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair Manchester, for a showcase in the retail area in 2020

Retail outlets

- Manchester Art Gallery shop
- An Tobar gallery shop, Tobermory, Mull
- Made in Stroud, Stroud (guest artist)
- Billcliffe Gallery, Glasgow