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**School: Bath School of Design**

**Researcher: Rachael Howard**

**Project Title: Red Work and Wit of The Stitch**

**UOA: 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory**

Research Timeline

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| **Date** | **Rationale of research activities and decisions undertaken** |

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| Sept 2012 - Sept 2013 | I'm a designer in residence at Liverpool Hope University as part of the [AA2A](https://aa2a.biz/network/user/rachael/album/1110) scheme (Artist Access to Art Colleges). I’m keen to explore using the Mimaki digital fabric printer.  My AA2A statement:  *AA2A has enabled me to further my practice in textile digital printing. Exploring my fascination with spontaneous gestural mark making, I have zoomed in on small scale painterly marks and showcased their innate vitality, something only digital printing can offer.* |
| 2012 - 2014 | Early exploration of digitally printing images to a very large scale using facilities whilst artist in residence at Liverpool Hope University. Invited by Jenny Waterson curator at Waterside Arts Centre to have a solo exhibition to celebrate their 10th anniversary. Discussed ideas with JW about the content of the show focussing on Redwork quilts as a starting point and combining the traditional stitched quilts with contemporary approaches to making quilts. Began making the first exhibit titled: Red Work. Made contact with sound artist Nigel Piper and he facilitated me introducing sounds into two of the main exhibits. |

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| Nov 2013 - Jan 2014 | I begin working on “Blue Red Work”. The idea of reflecting how indigo blue thread became popular a few decades after Turkey red dye and that the blue stem stitched work was referred to as ‘blue redwork” appealed to me and I decided to make a large scale work to fit the longest wall in the exhibition room. I devised a series of large (50x50cm) scale square fabric tiles that I placed together forming a patchwork. The patchworked tiles moved from images in printed red to blue and then to a mix of red and blue. The images were taken again from my sketch books and included a mix of drawings wich were screen printed and digitally printed. I was able to include my collected scraps of fabric off cuts, threads and white board drawings amongst other things. The final artwork measured 200x800cm which totally fitted the wall size in the exhibition room. I wanted to fill the wall from top to bottom. |

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| Oct 2012 - Oct 2014 | Jenny Waterson (JW), curator at Waterside Arts Centre, Manchester, contacts me to invite me to have a solo exhibition, linked with celebrating the Watersides’s 10th anniversary.  I have a continuing interest in18th century domestic embroidery such as cross stitch samplers and crazy patch work quilts and following JW’s interest in my [“Casket”](https://www.62group.org.uk/artist/rachael-howard/) piece, based on 18th Century caskets, myself and JW discussed the idea of exploring my interest in redwork quilts and combining it with digital printing techniques as content for the solo show. The domestic nature of the subject and the link with new digital fabric printing techniques appealed to the feeling JW wanted for the solo exhibition that of accessibility and engagement for the audience at Waterside. I welcomed the idea of building on my interest in the inspirational redwork quilt viewed in 2009 as a starting point for the exhibition and using contemporary processes to carry out ideas.  I’m also interested in working with a sound artist to bring sounds into my work. This idea stems from when I see gestural marks and doodles I often hear sounds to match to the visuals and it follows my interest in recording incidental sounds and odd conversations. If we receive funding then we will be able to afford to collaborate with another artist on incorporating sounds.  Ideas and work begins and myself and JW work on an application for funding from Arts Council England. The exhibition has a working title of Digital Domestic. |
|  | **More detailed timeline below** |
| Feb 2013 | I begin the role of Lecturer in Textiles at Bath School of Art and Design. |
| Sept 2013 | Arts Council England grant £14+k funding for the solo exhibition.  The Williamson Art Gallery added to the funds enabling the exhibition to tour to the gallery.  Bath Spa University added funding towards the exhibition catalogue. |
| Sept 2013 | I begin working on “Red Work” my contemporary interpretation of a redwork quilt. Using pencil drawings from a sketchbook I filled last year that contains a mix of imagery. I will screen print my linear sketches (rather than traditionally stem stitching the lines) in shades of red dye on to individual squares of cream coloured linen cloth. The fabric squares I will then be machine stitched together to form a large scale pieced top. In total 112 squares are printed and stitched together to make a piece measuring 200x360cm - the size of the piece has been made to fit the width of wall space in the exhibition room. |
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| Jan 2014 | Polly Leonard, founder of Selvedge magazine agrees to write a Red Work catalogue essay. Polly has been an admirer of my work since seeing my wall hanging, “Indian Embroidery Factory” in a group exhibition “Art Textiles” in 1996. |
| March 2014 | I began work on “Wrestlers”. I again used a printed backdrop and this time I enlarged a felt tip ‘Spinaroo’ drawing that my son had made when he was 5 yrs old. The scribbly mix of circular lines contrasted with the vertical lines of Rainbow Joggers and were again enlarged to a large scale of 240x300cm. I then made a triptych of wrestler portraits which I had been sketching having seen a live wrestling match last year, they were displayed in frames on top of the printed background. This piece again showed a mix of colours and depicted another of the themes I had been sketching recently. |
| April 2014 | I began work on “Blue A4” which was an A4 painting made by my son when he was 5 yrs old. I was again interested in the lovely mix of blues in the painting and the gestural sweeps of the brush. I printed the painting onto cotton and card at a large scale again highlighting the immediacy and energy of the painted line. I added small amounts of machine stitch to enhance the overall appearance. |
| May 2014 | I worked on accessories for the exhibition including “Cats and Dogs” cushion collection, “Staff Meeting” hanky and a series of covered buttons and tea towels. All of the pieces depicted elements from my collections of hand written notes and doodles that I had made or my colleagues and children had made. Again the idea was to celebrate the spontaneity of handwriting, words and sketches displayed on domestic, utility items. |
| Oct 2014 - Jan 2015 | Red Work opens at Waterside.  Internationally renowned textile artist [Michael Brennand-Wood](http://brennand-wood.com/michael.html) opens the exhibition. |
| Feb 2015 - Mar 2015 | Red Work opens at The Williamson Art Gallery, Wirral.  Director of the [Bluecoat Display Centre](http://www.bluecoatdisplaycentre.com/), Sam Rhodes opens the exhibition. |
| Sept 2015 | June Hill (freelance curator and writer of textiles) invites me to take part in the group show ‘wit’ of the stitch exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, Wales. June would like to show “Rainbow Joggers”, “Trumpeter” and “Girl with beach towel” from Red Work exhibition plus commission new work to show alongside. |
| Jan 2016 - Mar 2016 | I make work for The ‘Wit’ of The Stitch’ Exhibition. The new work made for the exhibition utilises digital prints of individual off cuts of fabric printed to a large size. I then use the off cuts as a landscape for screen printing figures amongst the digital print. This work follows on from similar ideas explored in the series of small framed works titled “Character Consequences” from Red Work exhibition, where I used offcuts of digital prints as background textures for screen printed figures. |
| Mar 2016 - April 2016 | Red Work opens at Bath School of Art and Design. |
| 8/9 April 2016 | Textiles Matters: [Red Work Symposium](https://www.instagram.com/p/BD8ydllwozh/).  Co convened by myself and [Tim Parry Williams](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tim-parry-williams-92741835/?originalSubdomain=no) with speakers:  [Jenny Waterson](http://jennywaterson.com/portfolio/red-work-rachael-howard/) (curator of Red Work exhibition) - discussing the commissioning and curating of Red Work show.  [Kate Hebert](https://americanmuseum.org/2020/05/red-cross-quilts-from-wwi/) (curator at The American Museum, Bath) - discussing the museums collection of pictorial quilts.  [Dr Claire Rose](http://clarerosehistory.com/home/) - discussing pictorial quilts made by professional tailors.  [Lynn Setterington](https://www.lynnsetterington.co.uk/) - discussing Lynn’s community Signature quilt project.  [Dr Melanie Miller](http://www.melaniemillertextiles.co.uk/) - examining stitch within children's education.  Symposium blog post:  <https://irenebrination.typepad.com/irenebrination_notes_on_a/2016/04/rachel-howard-red-work.html> |
| May 2016 - July 2016 | Red Work opens at [The Burton Art Gallery and Museum](https://www.artrabbit.com/events/rachael-howard-red-work). |
| July 2016 - Sept 2016 | [The ‘wit’ of the stitch](http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk/exhibitions/the-wit-of-the-stitch/) exhibition opens at Ruthin Craft Centre, Wales.  I make 4 framed textile pictures for the exhibition, titled,  “No not really…”, “Onwards”, “Sheltering” and “Doves performance”. |
| Aug 2016 | Linked to The ‘wit’ of the stitch exhibition I am invited to be artist in residence at Ruthin Craft Centre as part of [“Artist Story 3”](http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk/learning/artist-story-3-rachael-howard/). I deliver drop in screen printing workshops for the visitors during the week long residency. |
| April 2017 | Red Work tours to Edinburgh as part of The Knitting and Stitching Show gallery space. I deliver a “Covered Buttons” workshop at the show. |
| Aug 2017 | “Red Work” (the wall hanging from “Red Work” exhibition) is selected for a group show, The Festival of Quilts Fine Art Quilt Masters at NEC, Birmingham. |
| Oct 2017 | Red Work tours to Alexandra Palace, London as part of The Knitting and Stitching Show gallery space.  Red Work tour ends, having visited 6 UK venues from Oct 2014 - Oct 2017. |
| Feb 2021 | “Blue Red Work” wall hanging to be installed at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool. |