



Anne Griffiths – Contemporary Textile Art – June 2014 Newsletter

Dear All,

A short month, but June has been packed full of work and visiting lots of exhibitions in Paris.

Although I had walked past I had never been inside the [Centre Pompidou](#), the most amazing structure and inspiring in itself. There were a number of exhibitions on, and one ticket gives access to them all. The artist I was particularly interested in seeing was Martial Raysse who I had never heard of before but gained acclaim in the early 1960's working in New York with the likes of Yves Klein and Jean Tinguely.

Many of his early works are collages, including this one entitled "Portrait of an Ancient Friend". The headdress, jewellery and style of pattern on the sleeve remind me of the Holbein portraits of Tudor women, and somehow of Vermeer's painting "Girl Reading a Letter". I think it would be a fantastic source of inspiration for a piece of embroidery and it is definitely going in my "ideas" folder!



The whole exhibition was huge and fascinating to see how a modern artist's work has changed and developed over the decades. Also on show was a major retrospective of the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson but I am sure I have talked about the work of this ground breaking photographer before so will move on to another photographer, [Robert Mapplethorpe](#) whose work was shown in two exhibitions, one at the [Grand Palais](#) in the other in the [Musée Rodin](#).

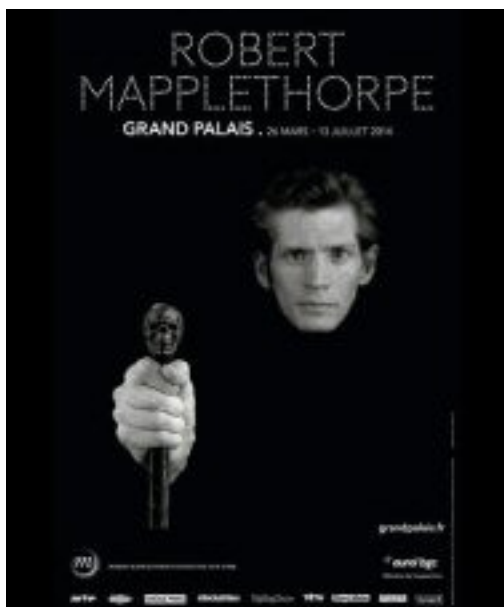
The informal garden of the Musée Rodin is beautiful, filled with flowers as well as wooded areas and a delicious café - the perfect setting for Rodin's sculptures as you would expect. These include his monumental 1890 commission "Gates of Hell" for a museum which was never built but from where two of his most familiar of his sculptures, "The Thinker" and "The Kiss", originated.

Although friends with many of the Impressionist painters including Monet and Renoir, Rodin was never an Impressionist sculptor choosing rather to find his own distinct style. It is hard to imagine now, but his sculptures were often considered too experimental and were controversial during the early years of his career. Sculpture was expected to represent either mythology or an historical event but for Rodin there was no necessity to reference any subject at all. In fact, his earliest piece “Age of Bronze” was deemed so lifelike that he was accused of casting it from a model. Rodin outraged, produced photographs of his model and the sculpture to show the differences between the two, and was exonerated.

Rodin's view of photography, in line with contemporary opinion, was that it's merit was in a documentary, rather than artistic capacity. Photographs certainly influenced his creative process though and he used them extensively to rework pieces visually rather than manually. Although Rodin never used a camera himself, he worked with photographers such as Edward Steichen who used lighting to create images of the plaster models with such a quality that allowed Rodin to work into them with pen, pencil and wash.



Robert Mapplethorpe was a photographer but sculptor at heart, and like Rodin, an admirer of Michelangelo. Searching for aesthetic perfection in either the bronzed body of Lisa Lyon, the world champion body builder, or Derrick Cross, his photographs are studies of muscular form. His compositions often include draped fabric to give the impression of classical sculptures or sometimes he covers his subjects in dried and cracked mud, perhaps to look like plaster casts.



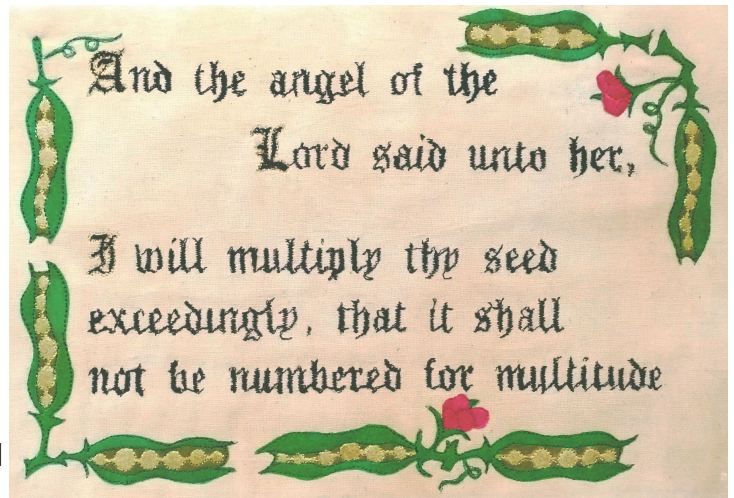
Included in the exhibition at the Grand Palais are his studies of anatomical details, the relationship between flowers and bodies. In contrast to his portraiture and nudes these still lifes of lilies, orchids and tulips are mostly printed in bright colours and are quite overwhelming.

It is sad that Robert Mapplethorpe is mostly remembered for his images of S&M which was only one aspect of his oeuvre. There is so much more depth to the work of a man whose life was cut tragically short by AIDS in 1989.

So now to the work part of the month!

I have been luckily enough to trial the new [Toyota Oekaki Renaissance](#) sewing machine this month in preparation for their launch event at [Drink Shop & Do](#). It is a stylish looking machine available in red, green or black, and quite reasonably priced. It has an interesting new feature which I have never seen before whereby by switching to Oekaki mode the foot pedal can be used to control the width of the satin stitch rather than the speed which is set by a dial at a constant rate.

Opposite is a sample I made for the event which uses this feature to produce italic like writing. It also has a gliding foot which can sew through 12 layers of fabric and would be useful for quilters.



There have been some bookings for the residential course in Cornwall, October 31st – November 7th which will be a combination of stitch and mixed media on the subject of ["Trees"](#). I think that this will be the perfect season for this subject and I am very excited about seeing Heligan in the autumn. You can see [my samples](#) and those from students on the [spring course](#) on my facebook page (you don't need a facebook account). If you are interested in focusing more on machine embroidery as we do in the ["Gardens"](#) course then let me know and I am happy to combine that into the week. Do let me know as soon as possible if you are interested as I need to confirm with the farm.



By popular demand I will be repeating the [Beachcombing](#) course again from March 13th - 20th 2015 but for those who have come before, and some of you are already booked, this will be combined with a new week on handmade books. We will look at one or two different book structures every day. As the numbers are always limited to twelve, there will be plenty of time to cover all the topics and you are welcome to pick and choose as you please.

As promised I have created a [gallery of books](#) which includes structures from

other courses and I will add to this over the summer, am working on a couple based on packaging structures at the moment, hopefully I will add those in the next week or so. There are only a few places left so I know it's early but do let me know if you are interested in coming.

There are three sets of new work from the Machine Embroidery Distance Learning course and the galleries are here, some beautiful work - I am always amazed that there is always something completely new in every parcel. [Hilary Soper's](#) Unit One and [Margot Daly](#) and [Pamala Page's](#) versions of Unit Two.

Am so pleased to be able to send this out just in time I think, to still qualify as a June newsletter, so till next time ...

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.