



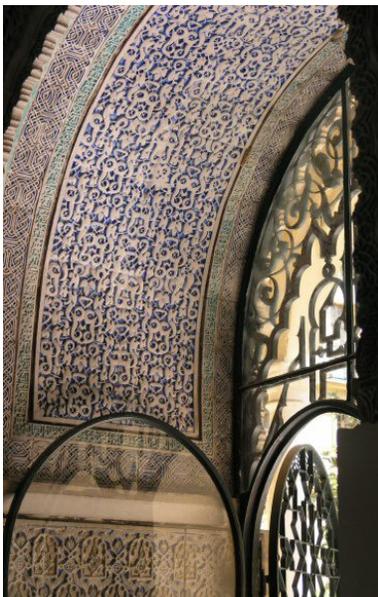
## Anne Griffiths – Contemporary Textile Art – September/October Newsletter

Dear All,

I am really not sure where the months go but it has been a busy and productive summer for me, hence one newsletter for September and October!

September began with a trip to Spain. I had never been before and it was difficult to decide between Barcelona to see Gaudi's fantastic architecture or the beautiful region of Andalusia with its Moorish art which so inspired Gaudi's work. Andalusia won, and I began in Seville.

Seville was under Muslim rule until 1248 when it was incorporated into the Christian kingdom of Castile however much of the Moorish architecture remains. The Alcazar, originally built as a fort is still used today by the Spanish royal family. This style of Islamic art is known as Mudéjar, was developed under Christian rule and inspired by the traditional Arabic style including calligraphy, secular and religious art.



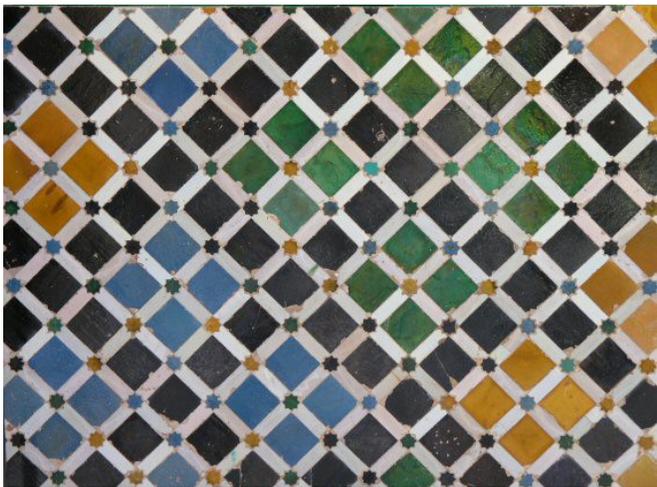
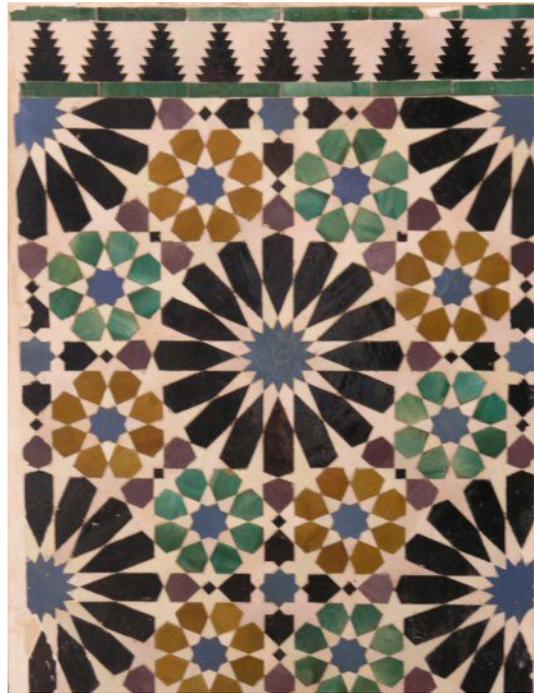
An intimate city, Seville is made to walk around. The Cathedral and Alcazar at the centre with squares and streets with colourful shops covered with large sheets of white fabric to create a cool shade are so relaxing. You can spend a whole day just meandering through this lovely city stopping occasionally to partake in the Spanish lifestyle where there are coffee and tapas bars at every corner.

The old town reaches the banks of the River Guadalquivir, which is the only river port in Spain. In 1519, Ferdinand Magellan departed from here for the first circumnavigation of the world. Today the Triana

district west of the river is perfect for an evening meal and a drink whilst watching the sun go down.

On to Granada, the city of the pomegranate, and where the motif which can be found everywhere from drain covers to wall tiles. The Alhambra was of course the highlight of the city, built in the 10th century as a palace and fortress it is the best example of nazari (built during the rule of the Nasrid dynasty) architecture in Spain.

I was particularly interested in looking at the tiles and the tessellations. I had read they had inspired M.C.Escher's work after his visit in 1922. This is not an area of design I have investigated much however if you are interested you can check out the complex [symmetries and the maths](#). Apparently the Alhambra tiles have examples of all the 17 possible symmetry groups and clearly show that the Arabic artists knew the maths underlying these geometric patterns.



An unexpected bonus was the temporary exhibition of canvases, photos and watercolours by Sean Scully.

Scully is just one of the many artists who have made the journey to the "Light from the South". This journey has taken artists including Delacroix, Matisse, Nolde, Delaunay and Klee to the south of Spain and the north of Africa looking at the three components of Arabic architecture, geometry, rhythm and light.

I can say without a doubt that the whole trip was hugely inspirational and there will definitely be some mudéjar, nazari and tessellation inspired workshops coming up!

Back home to a climate where it doesn't seem to stop raining, I had a trip to Exeter and the Creative Stitches show where I met old friends and made new ones, many of whom requested courses next year. I am beginning to plan a trip to the South West around the [Beach](#) course which is running from 1st-8th March. If you are part of a textile group in this area, and would like a talk or workshop, then do suggest some dates and I will be happy to extend my trip. This way means there is no additional fee for travel, which is so expensive these days and if you could give me a bed for the night it would be very much appreciated!



I will also be running the [Baskets of Fruit](#) again next October 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> so let me know if you are interested in coming and I will reserve a place.

October was a busy month with workshops and the opening of the “Alice’s House” exhibition.



The first workshop was for Oxfordshire Federation of WI's and we were making [soluble bowls](#). The WI's gold medal competition this year is for a stitched vessel, and this is one technique that could be used.

The “Alice’s House” exhibition opened at [Cornerstone](#) on 17th October. I have made some new pieces since the Sedberg exhibition such as the ‘Who in the World am I’ distorting mirrors, as well as ten hangings showing the Tenniel images used in the original version of the book. The exhibition will run until 25th November: pop in if you can!



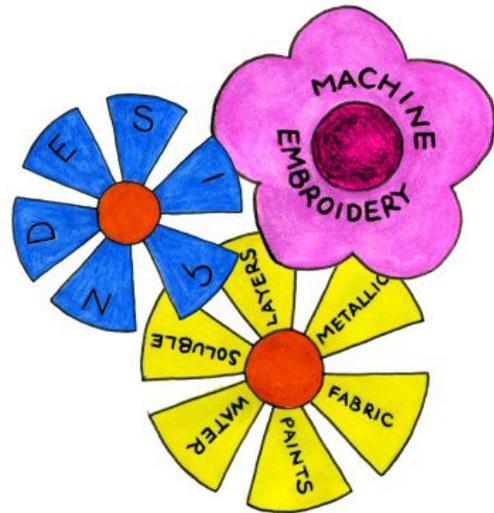


Immediately following was a week of teaching at the Ladygrove Primary school in Didcot celebrating "The Big Draw".

Children from 4 to 11 years printed with leaves, packaging, potatoes, card, foam board and stencilled to produce trees, tabards, peacocks and fish hangings.

I was completely exhausted after one week spent with such creative and excited children, but I don't know who had more fun! You can read more about the week and see images on the [projects](#) page.

On the subject of teaching, I have been asked several times over the last few years, "What has happened to City & Guilds?" The answer, as I understand it, is that the courses are still available although very few and far between due to issues of government funding Adult Education. In my experience of talking to people who are unable to find a college offering these courses, it is the personal development of ideas and techniques that is more important than the accreditation.



To this end, I have decided to offer the City & Guilds One Year Machine Embroidery course via Distance Learning. The only difference between this and the accredited course is that as I am not affiliated to a college, I cannot offer any kind of certification.

Sometime ago I wrote and ran this course for Distance Learners through Gloucester College. Students would be sent a printed book of instructions, ideas and images together with a list of samples they needed to produce. The samples would be sent to me and I would review and return them with a critique and ideas for development together with the next unit of work.

I plan to run the new course in exactly the same way. There will be six units that can be taken at your own pace, expect to take a year, and I anticipate the cost to be £40 per unit plus return postage. There will of course be the cost of materials on top of this. If anyone is interested or would like to learn more then do get in touch either by phone or email and we can discuss your particular learning goals.

Finally, I visited one small exhibition this month, the [Richard Hamilton Late Works](#) at the National Gallery. The artist planned this exhibition shortly before his death in September 2011, specifically for the Gallery, where he had taught as well as been a frequent visitor. The pictures are a mixture of photography, digitally printed images and painting. Often they reference iconic works by artists such as Marcel Duchamp. His futuristic 1912 painting “Nude Descending a Staircase” is recreated in his painting “Descending Nude” and Fra Angelico’s Renaissance Painting “The Annunciation” is resurrected in his 2008 work “The Passage of the Angel to the Virgin”.



Throughout this interesting exhibition I wished I understood better the subtle references to other works in the National Gallery.



Hope the winter months are giving an opportunity for being at home in the warm and doing more stitching! More in November.

Best,

Anne