



EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
2010 - 2023



People involved in East London Textile Arts Projects in 2023

School 360 Afterschool Textile Club

Cosmos De Leadus
Tilio Ebbensgaard
Rosa Edgworth
Macie Flegg
Zariyah Gordon
Mira Jain
Iskra Klancisar Henderson
Sienna Krishnan
Victoria Stancescu
Clara Tillet
Aydaan Abu-Bakr
Khaion Barnes
Emily Blackham
Ettore Elven-Boita
Monty McLean
Ava Odili
Nyla Tayler
Jackson Turnbull
Stanley Wick
Eliana Zekariase

The McGrath Makers

Clifton Baptiste
Halima Begum
Felicia Danqua
Donald Dunn
Ramdas Laxman
Felicia Rodriguez
Ade Adepitan
Sharon Reagon
Herminio Branco
Carina Emmanuel
Sonia

Oral History Participants

Aslam Virk
Monica Charlemagne
Sindy Jackson
Sonia Tuttiett
Mary Sprou
Karen Harris
Laura Holland
Rachael Matthews
Sonia Tuttiett

Rag Rug Makers

Sandra Elliot
Prue Guthrie
Sindy Jackson
Jen Cable
Mani Gollapalli
Taskin Fazaldin
Phillipa Brock
Clare Wright
Laura Holland

Little Ilford Textile Group

Kang Sing Fung
Radha Rajan
Sicily George
Sameena Kazmi
Taskin Fazaldin
Sandra Elliot
Lorna Lambert
Polly Singh
Bula Susmita Sakar
Rekah Patel
Nell Chapman
Sindy Jackson
Laura Holland
Prue Guthrie
Saif Khen
Helen Gudge
Ellen Chapman

Subco Group

Simran Kaur
Gurbachan Boll
Usha Sappal
Jaimini Patel
Joginder Sharma
Gurcharn Guruwal
Balwinder Channa
Kaniz Sajid
Arjit Marwara
Shakuntla Devi
Madhu Raichura
Nurul Nehar Begum
Avta Sagoo

Monday Group

Karen Harris,
Lynn Cranfield
Parvin
Anndrreen McGrechan
Margaret Adams
Laura Sparrowhawk
Marian Chery
Rekha Patten
Salma Nisa
Mile Shorna
Kaushika Vaghela
Harbhajan Panser
Lesley Fowler
Benice Eid
Sudesh Dhir
Kushaly Dev

A few words about this History

I was prompted into making this history of East London Textile Arts (ELTA) by Newham Heritage Month's call for cultural projects in late 2022. I had been meaning to write it for some time. Recording the life of ELTA, with its beginnings over 15 years ago, and involving hundreds of people, is not easy, and I do not have the skills to do it as well as I would like, or to the standard deserved by the many dedicated and talented people on the project. I am not a professional writer, nor historian, nor designer. But I have been a professional visual artist for the last 40 years and in true ELTA fashion, turn my hand to what needs to be done, and do it as best I can.

There are obvious short-comings. The typeface is uncomfortably small. It is the start of making an archive, in words, but mostly in pictures, of work we have undertaken. I am leaving analysis of the project to others, perhaps not so intimately connected. The timescale was very tight, though maybe that was what was needed to make this record. Crediting everyone equally is a daunting task. I will correct egregious mistakes in further printings.

I thank Jan Cullen, James King and Faizan Fiaz of Newham Heritage Month for their support and tolerance, especially with our lack of IT skills. A visit to see my old friend Helen Ganly improved the design of this book no end. I also thank my husband, James Ramsay, who has copy edited this book, not easy as I am dreadful at spelling and punctuation. Behind the scenes, he has been a constant presence, for a time formally as part of the management team, where amongst other things he provided invaluable assistance with fundraising. Since his retirement he has continued editing, advising and helping with the humdrum admin of keeping a project going. My fellow ELTA leaders, Sonia and Rachael, have provided fabulous ideas, energy and constant good company; the management team, all local, amaze me with their steadiness and understanding of the project. Without all our volunteers we would not exist. I'd like to thank Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, who over the entire life of ELTA has provided me personally with so much support and friendship in running this project. But most of all I thank all the ELTA members, plus those who drop in and out of our lives, for their dedicated textile work, selflessly donated to our communities and for their pursuit of ever better craftsmanship.

It has been a joy to work with them all.



Celia Ward
ELTA leader



List of ELTA Projects

2007/8 Religious signs and symbols
2008/9 Alphabets of the World
2010/11 St Barnabas altar *Textile Lives* frontal
2012 St Martin-in-the-Fields exhibition
2012/2013 *Newham Map* and *Noah's Ark* Hangings
2013 Adults with Learning disabilities exhibition at Prick Your Finger
2013/14 St Barnabas Heritage project
2014 *Tree of Life*
2014 Giant puppet making
2014 *Death and the Jester* exhibited in MAG3 Projektraum, Vienna
September 2014, curated by David Lillington
2014/15 *Dental Health* with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust
2014/15 Hellenic exhibition *Deities, Beasts and Beauty*
2015 ELTA embroidery workshop at the V&A
2015 St Martin-in-the-Fields exhibition
2015 *Yan Tan Tethera* in partnership with Cecil Sharpe House
2015/17 *Dissecting Diabetes*
2016/17 *Our Street Dress*
2016/17 *Spiders and Sparrowhawks* with Friends of Epping Forest
2017 Tate Exchange project *The Migrant's Coat* with Counterpoint Arts
2018 Kantha project
2018 *Prospero's Cloak* with Blue Apple Theatre, Winchester
2018 Puppet project with The Watts Gallery
2018/19 *Orientalism and John Lewis* with the Watts Gallery and Art Workers' Guild
2019/2021 *Kalila wa Dimna* with P21 Gallery and Dr Rachel Scott
2021 *Madge Gill* with Newham Heritage Month Project, with curator Sophie Dutton
2020/21 Knitting project with Food Bank, Manor Park
2020/21 Oral history project
2021 *Postcards Across the River* with Clapham Park Creative
2021 *Folded Life* with curator Grant Watson
2021/22 *Our River, Our Lives* in partnership with Friends of the River Roding
2021/22 School 360 project – start of Residency at School 360
2022 Boro bags – Laura Holland
2022/23 *Stories We Love*
2023 *Romeo and Juliet for All*

Exhibitions

St Barnabas Church, Manor Park
Little Ilford Baptist Church
Canning Town Library
West Ham Church
St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square
St Paul's Church, Euston
The Hellenic Centre, Marylebone
The Art Workers' Guild, Queen Square WC1
Prick your Finger, Bethnal Green
Epping Forest Visitor Centre
Tate Exchange
The Watts Gallery
Stratford Library
P 21 Gallery, Euston

Films

Deities, Beasts and Beauty
Our Street Life
Dissecting Diabetes
The Four Friends
Migration Tales

Cultural, Health and Academic Partners

Art Workers' Guild
Friends of Epping Forest
Kings College Dental School
Newham Public Health (Diabetes Project)
Newham Heritage month
Blue Skies Theatre
Blue Apple Theatre
Kent Community Health NHS Foundation
The Watts Gallery
Friends of the River Roding
The Hellenic Centre, London
Language Acts and World Making (funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council)
P21 Gallery
Tate Exchange

Community Partners

Froud Centre, Romford Road
Trinity Centre, East Avenue E12
Malayalee Association
Subco
Eckta
Jagonari Centre
St Barnabas Church
Little Ilford Baptist Church
Kensington School
Essex School
Sir John Heron School
School 360
Newham Social Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities
The Good Support Group

ELTA booklets

How to Embroider an Elephant
The Roman Alphabet
The Arabic Alphabet
The Hindi Alphabet
East London Textile Arts Patterns
East London Textile Arts Patterns by adults with learning disabilities
Hellenic Designs
The Tooth Witch
The Diabetes Monster
Orientalism in Textiles, with the Watts Gallery and the Art Workers' Guild
Mammon and his Victims by Lorna Lambert
Lockdown Memento
Kalila wa Dimna, Costumes and Textiles
The Four Friends from Kalila wa Dimna
Textile Tales, by Josie Tuttiatt
RaG-Time Manifesto
The Creative World of School 360
Song of the River Roding

Puppets

The Tooth Witch
The Sirens
Hellenic doll
Tooth Monsters
Tooth Fairies - various small puppets
For the Watts Gallery: Sun, Moon,
Turkish Horse, Ratty,
Mammon and his Victims
Kalila wa Dimna: Mouse, Crow,
Hunter, Tortoise, Deer

Clothes

Many jackets made with ELTA fabrics
Scarves made with ELTA fabrics
Newham Map Kimono
Jacket of Hades
Doctor's Gown (from Diabetes project)
Ottoman Gown
Eye Beret
TheTurtle Jacket
Dress with Street Scenes of Syrian War
Vegetable Trousers
Oriental Octagon Leggings
Paisley pattern T-shirt
Hemisphere Scarf designed from adults with learning disabilities' embroideries
Hemisphere Bomber Jacket (designed as above)
Fungi Top Hat
Embroidered Pinafore
Vegetable Apron
Men's waistcoats
T-shirts for performance at Blue Skies pantomime, Stratford 2019
ELTA dress made for Natasha Lemos
ELTA jacket made for Sue Haigh

Accessories

Many different bags
Hellenic Crown
Forest Shoe

Other Creations

Kang Sing Fung's decorated box
Many cushions

Fashion Shows

Newham City Farm 2016
Little Ilford Baptist Church 2016
Manor Park Library 2017
Art Workers' Guild 2019 and 2021
Little Ilford Baptist Church 2022
Stratford Library 2022
School 360 2023

Hangings

St Barnabas Church hangings
Roman Alphabet
Arabic Alphabet
Hindi Alphabet
Altar Frontal with Mary and Birds
Patchwork Altar Frontal
Mary and Joseph
Hexagons and Birds

Little Ilford Baptist Church Hangings

New Testament hanging
Noah's Ark
Newham Map
The Mustard Seed

Sue Haigh Quilts

Kalila wa Dimna
River Roding x 2
Epping Forest Birds x 2
Diabetes
Sindy Jackson's Mondrian Animals

Other Hangings

Malayalee Association
Romford Road
Oriental China with Flora Roberts
The Four Friends, Kalila wa Dimna, designed by Celia Ward, embroidered by Sicily George
Kool Kidze, Pre-School, Animals
Essex School Hanging
McGrath Makers Fish Hanging
Ganesha with English Wild Flowers, St Barnabas Textile Group

Rag Rugs

River Roding
River Thames
Prayer Mat
Deer Don't Cross the Road, The Road Crosses the Forest
The Rajah and the Rice

Funders

ELTA was set up with the support of John Connor, then director of the Froud Centre (now Aston Mansfield Community Centre). Most of ELTA's funds are from The National Lottery's Awards for All programme, followed by support in many different forms from the London Borough of Newham. Between 2008-13 Transform Newham provided grants plus invaluable advice and support from their project director Matthew Porter. In 2012 we received a government grant of £25,000 from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills through their Transformation Grants. Several grants were received from the church-based Near Neighbours project, and from London Catalyst, which again provided expert advice over a number of years from Victor Wilmot. The Art Workers' Guild outreach committee provided grants for a number of projects between 2014-17. For joint projects at Tate Exchange, The Watts Gallery, and the Kalila wa Dimna project we received funding from The Arts Council, and for this last project, also from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Since 2016 we have been supported each year by the John Cutforth Trust, and since 2017 by the De Laszlo Foundation. In addition a number of small one-off grants have provided invaluable funding, enabling our teaching to continue seamlessly over more than 15 years. We are enormously grateful to all these funders, without whom ELTA simply could not exist. Sales of ELTA merchandising have also brought in helpful money.

East London Textile Arts (ELTA) has seen many hundreds of people passing through its classes over the 15 years of its life. Sadly they are too numerous to list, and we do not have a comprehensive list of attendees, as all classes are open to all. Some people come only once, others just a few times, yet such fleeting visitors sometimes gave much to the project. Others have been coming for over 10 years, becoming highly skilled collaborators, and have profoundly affected the nature of the project. We are currently compiling as complete a list of names as possible, but this will have to wait until a later publication. ELTA is managed by a group of dedicated local people whose names are listed below alongside those currently working on the project, in paid and voluntary capacities.

Management Committee

Iona Ramsay	Chair
Sandra Elliott	Secretary and Newham Heritage Month Volunteer
Lynn Cranfield	Treasurer
Karen Harris	Outreach and teaching
Sophia Ramsay	Consultant, adults with learning disabilities
Radha Rajhan	Wednesday Class representative
Kaushika Vaghela	Monday Class representative
Rachael Matthews	Leader Rag Rug and Weave
Celia Ward	Leader digital design and fundraising
Sonia Tuttiett	Creative Director and Lead Textile Artist

ELTA Sessional Workers

Sonia Tuttiett	Creative Director and Lead Textile Tutor
Rachael Matthews	Head of Weave
Celia Ward	Digital and book design, fundraising
Mary Spyrou	Textile Tutor, adults with learning disabilities
Karen Harris	Outreach
Keith Dixon	Accounts

Longstanding Support Workers

Eunice Odima, Roma Titre, Anita Morton

Current Volunteers

Sue Haigh	Quilt making
Andrew Brown	Photography
Frederic Landes	Photography
Lorna Lambert	Photography, digital design, costume making
Sindy Jackson	General Volunteering

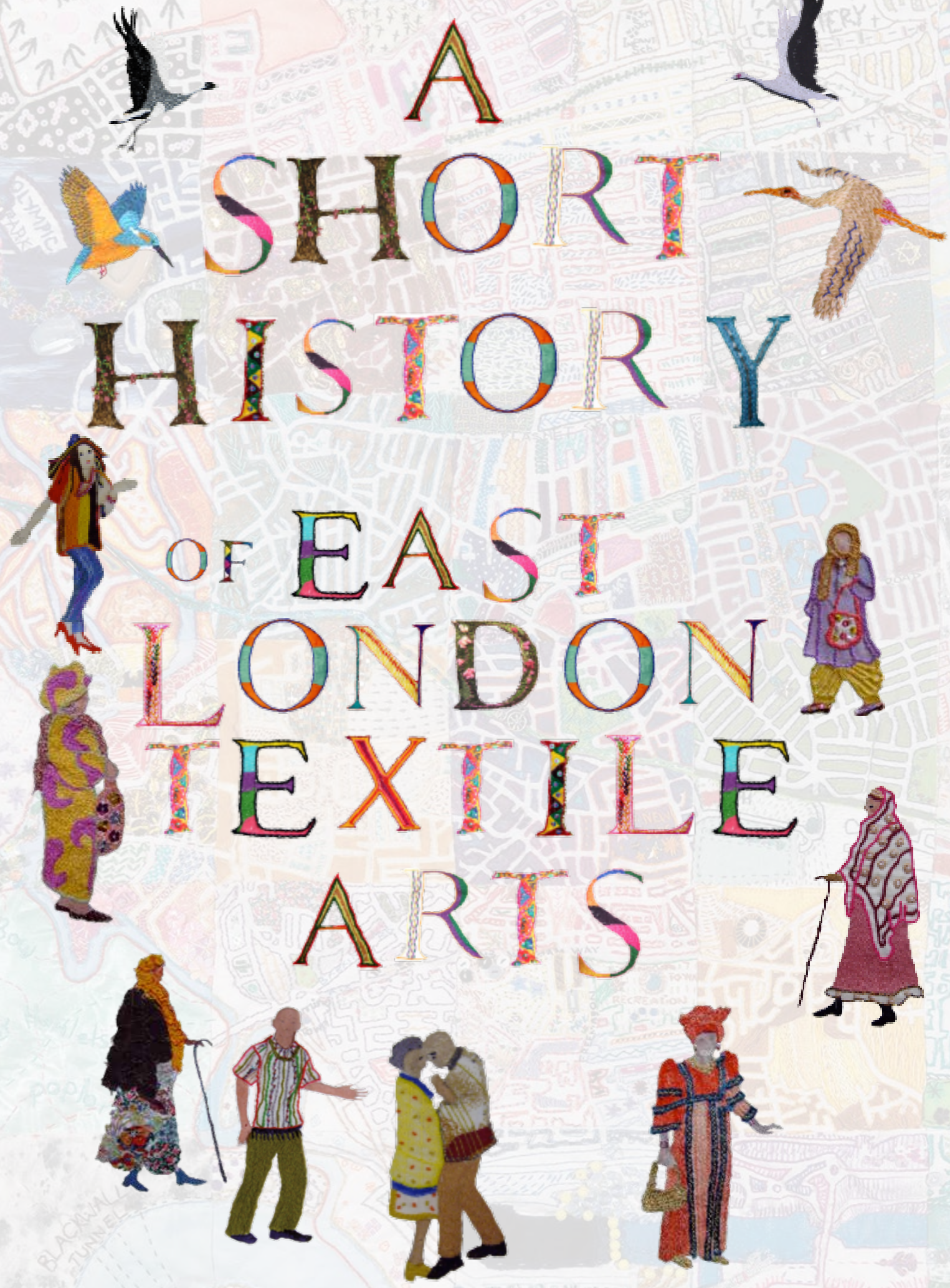
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www.eastlondontextilearts.com

@eltatextiles

Youtube: East London Textile Arts Videos

Fabric prints <https://www.spoonflower.com/profiles/east-london-textile-arts>



Written and designed by Celia Ward



THE BEGINNINGS

2007-8

East London Textile Arts began in a very small way in 2007. It was the brainchild of John Connor, a community worker at the Froud Centre, who believed there were many non-working women with unused textile skills who would enjoy a community project. I was new to Newham, having arrived in 2005 after three years in Romania where I had set up an art centre. I was immediately struck by the colourful shopping streets, the numerous textile shops, the stalls where tailors worked in the markets, adjacent to people selling great arrays of Indian braids. I watched huge Sikh and Hindu processions, presenting yet more fabrics and costumes. I was a painter by training, but how could I resist the vibrant textile life of the borough?

The idea was to create a grassroots organisation, managed and taught by local people and able to survive through its own fundraising. It took 9 months of planning and fundraising to get started. In the first year teaching was at a very basic level (myself a teacher) plus Sarbjit Natt, from the Brady Centre, Tower Hamlets our first visiting artist. Then I had only basic embroidery skills, which caused some people to leave because the standard was too low. Nevertheless our project succeeded in gathering groups of women interested in creating textiles for the community and wanting to continue when our funding came to an end. Most importantly three talented and dedicated women, Lorna Lambert, Sonia Tuttielt, and Kang Sing Fung, joined, enabling the project to grow, attract participants and funders, and become something that could create beautiful work.

Alphabets of the World started with Sonia setting up a weekly class at Little Ilford Baptist Church and teaching embroidery more seriously. Lorna, besides rapidly becoming a skilled embroiderer, took to making cards from photos of people's embroideries to sell at Open Days. She also began ELTA's practice of designing decorated papers for every project.

It was never the intention to create a women-only project, but with the exception of learning disabled groups, this is how it has turned out. However a number of our committed volunteers are male.





Above Embroidered animals accompanying decorated alphabets

How to Embroider an Elephant

was the first booklet Lorna made in 2009. It marked the birth of ELTA's regular booklets, cards and patterned papers. The papers were admired by Falkener Fine Arts Papers who wanted to sell them in their West End shop. But they wanted ELTA to pay £5000 for printing costs, meaning this commercial opportunity was not pursued.

Digitised Images

have made the reach of embroidery much larger. The long hours spent making now reaped much greater reward. The originals were made into hangings that decorated community centres and churches, while their digital images were used multiple times, in print and later on in social media.

ELTA philosophy

Bringing people together from all ethnicities and faiths was always an aim of ELTA. While we focused on only three alphabets, many others were completed in the second year. In classes people learnt from each other, sharing ideas and skills, as well as materials. Gradually an ethos developed where women gathered who wanted to make textiles for the community, rather than for themselves or their family. Participants earned their cost-free tuition by giving up their handiwork for community purposes. The group had ownership of the work, with individual names listed only on the walls of an exhibition and opposite title pages in books. Knitting classes sprang up, which ran differently, as knitting was for private use. ELTA was asked to teach this unknown craft at a South Asian community centre on High Street North to women recently arrived from South India. It was mostly run and taught by community members.



Left and right: Dancers from the Hindi Alphabet Hanging
 Above: Ganesha from Ganesha with English Wild Flowers Hanging
 Opposite: Arabic Alphabet design from ELTA booklet designed by Lorna Lambert





Early Hangings

Embroidered by
Little Ilford Textile Group
designed by Sonia Tuttiett

New Testament Hanging

Central to ELTA has been the aim of bringing people together from all faiths and none, and from all ethnicities. People from all faiths worked on hangings depicting each others' beliefs and traditions. New friendships were made and greater understanding of other faiths. After making hangings honouring Muslim, Hindu and Jewish faiths, ELTA made two Christian hangings. The first depicts four stories from the New Testament (Nativity, Healing of Jairus's daughter, Wedding feast at Cana and the Resurrection). The embroidered scenes were appliquéd onto a background that represents a stained glass window, decorated with the letters of the Greek Alphabet. It was our first foray into appliqué and stump work, with painted and embroidered backgrounds.



Mustard Seed Hanging

The Mustard Seed hanging was created for Little Ilford Baptist Church and made by the group that meets there. It was inspired by the parable of the Mustard Seed, and is a reflection of the nature of the church, planted in a community where many people from all over the world, of different backgrounds, cultures and abilities worship together as a family. The branches are full of different birds, happily living alongside one another. The birds were embroidered by many different people of all abilities and appliquéd onto the hanging, using stump work techniques. The fabric for the tree and backgrounds were hand painted and printed by the group members using a heat press, then quilted into place.



Noah's Ark

Right: *Noah's Ark* This was the first hanging to be quilted, so hung much better than the New Testament hanging. The background cloth was painted. The Hebrew letters developed out of the Alphabet Project, and from them decorated papers were designed, as well as greeting cards featuring individual embroideries. It was exhibited at Morley College Gallery, where it was much admired and a second version commissioned for a private home.



Sonia's group always loved embroidering in 3D. This bird was amongst a number created around 2012. They are frequently used in exhibitions to enliven borders of hangings, hats, costumes and puppets.



Bad Teeth

In 2015 we undertook an oral health project in partnership with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust. This happened when a dentist appeared on our doorstep with an idea that making textiles about dental health might motivate people to take better care of their teeth. For teeth, inactivity was the worst thing. We raised £10,000 from the National Lottery's Awards for All grants. We made embroideries of healthy and unhealthy foods, and healthy and unhealthy teeth (caused by smoking, drug misuse and poor diet). A life-size Tooth Witch was constructed and a number of tooth fairies (see page 22). The adults with learning disabilities group made lots of embroideries of sugary drinks and sweets and then separate teeth were made in needlepoint, and hung around the tooth witch's head.



Bottom right: *Teeth Hanging* unhealthy teeth embroideries on printed teeth cotton fabric. Middle right: Embroidered bad teeth details. Opposite page top: Detail from *The Newham Map*

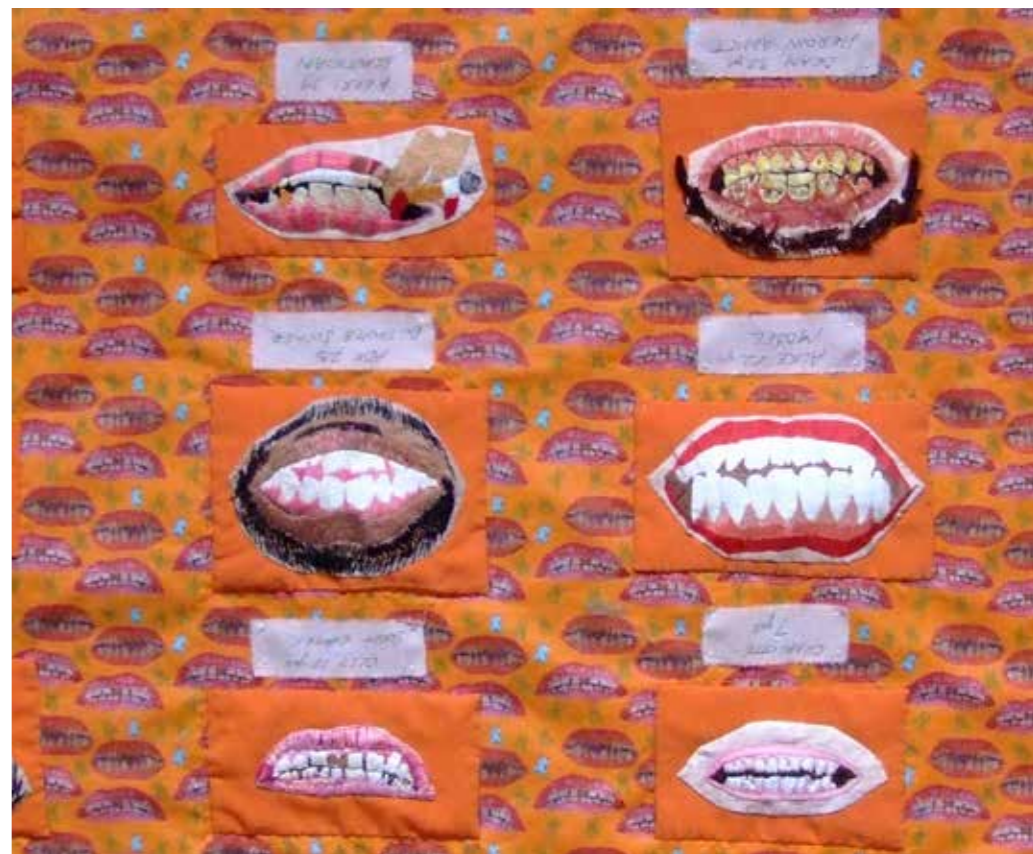




Photo by Elle Sillanpaa



Photo by Frederic Landes



Photo by Frederic Landes



Photo by Elle Sillanpaa



Photo by Frederic Landes



Fashion Shoots

Our first fashion shoot was in 2016 as part of *Our Street Dress*, making clothes and accessories from textile designs created from embroidered motifs made on the project. The designs were made using photoshop, then digitally printed by online company Spoonflower, first in America, then Germany, and now back in America. We have also used Contrado, a London based company.

Many of the best models came from The McGrath Makers, our learning-disabled group, run in partnership with Newham Social Services. We invited Elle Silanpaa, from the London College of Fashion to come and record our shoots.

Clockwise from top left: *Felted Crown* by the McGrath Makers, designed by Mary Spyrou; *Crow Costume*, embroidered crow motif by Sindy Jackson, fabric design by Celia Ward, costume design and making Sonia Tuttiett; *Deer Costume* rag rugging, embroidered words, by Kang Sing Fung, Lorna Lambert, and other members of Little Ilford Embroidery Group, designed and made by Rachael Matthews; *The Newham Kimono*, from textile print created from The Newham Map hanging, 2015, with bag by Shatilla Studio (Shatilla refugee camp, Lebanon); *Back of waistcoat*, embroidered, applied by Sicily George, from the Malayalee Association; *Three-quarter length coat*, Dorset button fabric design, designed and made by Lorna Lambert; *Doctor's Gown and Scarf*, with organs of the body prints, made on Dissecting Diabetes project 2015/16.

Clockwise from top left: *Printed chiffon shawl*, textile design with octagons made on Orientalism project in 2017; *Turtle Dress*, printed polyester textile, design from turtles made on Kalila wa Dimna project, dress design and making, Sonia Tuttiett, 2018-2022 (background hanging: embroideries from same project, quilted by Sue Haigh); *Cotton Jacket*, Newham Map textile design, design and making Sonia Tuttiett (*Pancreas Bag*, embroidered and made for Dissecting Diabetes Project 2015); *Long Cotton Shirt* 2020, lino print for Kalila wa Dimna project; *The Four Friends Cloak* from Kalila wa Dimna, embroidered by The McGrath Makers, designed and finished by Mary Spyrou;

Tooth Witch dress, mask and hat by Lorna Lambert, Dental Health project 2014/15 (Bad Teeth fabric design from embroidered teeth motifs by Little Ilford Embroidery Group); *The Migrant's Coat*, made by members of ELTA along with the public at Tate Exchange, 2018 as part of *Who Are We?* in partnership with Counterpoint Arts (*The Migrant's Coat* was taken on tour to New Zealand and now is in the collection of the Migration Museum, London).



Photo by Andrew Brown



Photo by Elle Sillanpaa



Photo by Elle Sillanpaa





Top: *Newham Map* by Little Ilford Textile Group, designed and finished by Sonia Tuttiett. Middle: detail from *Essex Primary School Hanging* for exhibition at St Martin-in-the-Fields, 2015. Bottom: *Romford Road Hanging* by Manor Park Library Textile Group, designed and finished by Sonia Tuttiett.



Fantasy Insect Hanging from *Spiders and Sparrowhawks* project 2016.
Overleaf: *Diabetes Quilt*, embroidery by ELTA members, quilting by Sue Haigh.





Animals

Opposite: Animals are perennially popular to embroider, and the first collection we did accompanied our first Alphabet Hanging, *The Roman Alphabet*, which we decorated with British animals, birds, and butterflies. Many of these images became popular cards and were used in the first group booklet. Next followed animals to decorate the Hindi Alphabet. The elephants and camels provided space for imagination in the depicting of traditional animal coverings. At first the hangings were pieced together very simply, without experience or knowledge, but with time people learnt, and the hangings gradually became expertly made.

Celebrations

End of project parties are a MUST for all our projects, with all the project work laid out for friends and family to see, along with spreads of food, brought by members of the group. These days are feasts for stomachs as well as eyes!

Trips

We try to run trips on most projects, for members to see their own work in exhibitions and to see other people's textile work at galleries and museums, especially the V&A, where we have been many times.

Groups were taken to see the Hellenic Centre's exhibition of Hellenic folk costumes, *Patterns of Magnificence*, created by Natasha Lemos. There have been frequent trips to the Art Workers' Guild for Lunchtime Conversations with members of the Guild, speaking alongside invited guests.

In 2017 ELTA was invited to join Counterpoint Arts at Tate Exchange to run a project, *The Migrant's Coat*, within their installation *Who Are We?* This entailed much enjoyed days out at Tate Modern, every day for a week in May 2019.

Goodwill

ELTA operates through the goodwill and hard work of many people. From its earliest days it gave employment and informal training to young people in teaching in the informal sector, especially classes for adults with learning disabilities. Outreach work has been taken on mostly by young people, taking craft work to small groups of people in community buildings and care settings around Newham.

Reflection on working with ELTA from its earliest days

My association with ELTA began way back in 2008 when I happened upon a notice advertising weekly embroidery classes, and the rest, as they say, is history. I must admit my first attempt at a chain stitch cat was a bit iffy, which at the time was the only embroidery stitch I knew, but Celia in her wonderfully polite way enthused about my work and encouraged me to continue with further embroideries. With a few new stitches under my hat I went on to embroider various pieces which included, to name a few, another cat, two horses, a unicorn, lion, griffon, letters D, H and Z and Arabic letters. It was also exciting to learn stencilling and fabric painting and how to combine them all into a finished article that complemented the fabulous embroidery hangings. Over the years I have also made puppets, bags, a mask, some jewellery, needle cases and lately stuffed cats made from fabrics I designed and printed using my home printer.

Shortly after I joined, Celia saw my capabilities and offered me a position as a paid project worker, which I dived head first into. It was my privilege to assist in teaching disadvantaged children in an after-school club, a Tamil women's group, the St Barnabas Church group, and our first group for adults with learning disabilities. The latter group gave me the greatest joy and satisfaction. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm and eagerness these adults applied to their embroidery pieces.

At this time the council was shutting down so many centres due to government spending cuts. I soon realised how important these sessions were. Not only did they bring together such diverse communities and groups and how much we had to offer each other, but also kept alive a needlecraft that was slowly being lost to a world where machines ruled supreme.

During this time, I began to see the potential of producing our own cards to help with funding and to encourage and reward participants with their own work as a keepsake to share with family and friends. I started by taking pictures of all the embroideries with my trusty old camera, and learnt how to load them into my new computer with the much-needed patient tuition of my late husband Bill. He showed me how to use the Picture It programme, and I was off and running. I began to experiment with the images, changing the sizing, adding groups together, making backgrounds, and so my work evolved to include bookmarks, T-shirts, decorated papers, writing sets, a book on how to embroider an elephant, and textile designs which followed at a later date.

I so enjoy my journey on the never-ending road of creativity, and continue to achieve the success of those earlier endeavours that ELTA directed my first steps along.

Lorna Lambert





Deities, Beasts & Beauty

at
The Hellenic Centre, London
2014/15

An invitation to exhibit at the Hellenic Centre provided us with the excuse for dramatic use of embroidery. The inspiration for this project was the exhibition of Hellenic folk costumes, *Patterns of Magnificence*, organised by Natasha Lemos. The drama of the sirens, we showed through small embroidered puppets with human faces on bird bodies. The three-headed dog Cerberus was another delight to create. The life-size puppets we draped in our printed fabrics, using Hellenic motifs, along with cheap cloth bought in fabric shops in East Ham and Green Street. The wide range of fabrics available at low cost near our classes made costume-making affordable.



Top row: *Hades* and, either side details from *Sirens over Canary Wharf Hanging*.
2nd row: left, *Horse and Hellenic motif textile design*; right, *Cerberus*.
3rd row: left, *Puppet in Bird Fabric*; centre, *Hellenic Costume with Bear's Head*; right, *Poseidon*.
Bottom row: left, *Hellenic embroidered border draped on wooden figure*; right, *Head of Medusa*.

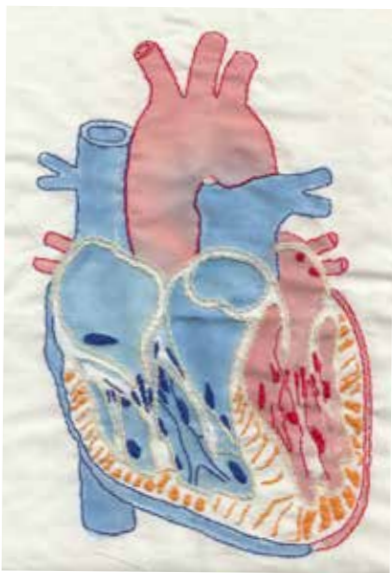
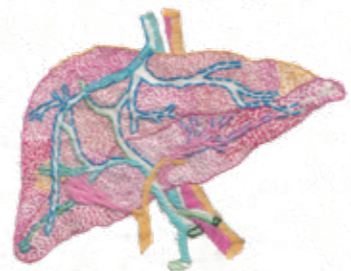
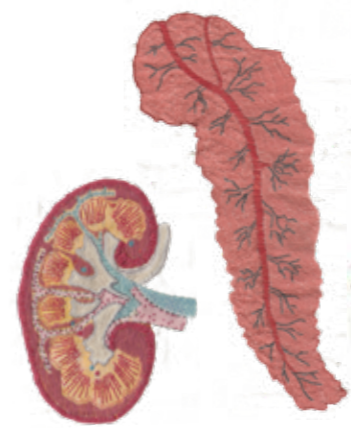


Photo by Andrew Brown

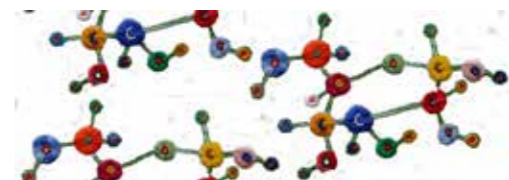


Dissecting Diabetes 2015-17

Following the success of the dental project, Newham Public Health asked us to run a project raising awareness of diabetes amongst children. We had a volunteer researcher, and a children's book *The Diabetes Monster* was created with children's writer and editor, Marilyn Watts. The project ran for over a year and culminated in an exhibition at the Art Workers' Guild, with hangings, costumes and photographs. We worked with embroiderer Fleur Oakes, who taught needlelace which was used to create an embroidered Dutch style *Still Life of Healthy Food*. Fabrics were made from vegetable designs, and then turned into trousers, doctor's gown and surgeon's hat. We were invited to talk at two medical conferences, which led to a review of the project in the *Diabetic Eye Journal*.



Top row: left, *Doctor's Gown fabric* designed from embroideries of organs affected by diabetes by members of the Little Ilford Embroidery Group; centre, *Embroidered anatomical section of Mouth* with background design of liver, kidney, sweets and dinosaurs; right, *Dress with textile design from organs of the body affected by diabetes*.
2nd row; left, embroidered kidney; pancreas; insulin molecules; right, *Kidney Bag* on blue kidney textile design.
3rd row: embroidered liver; centre, *Kidney Fashion*; right, embroidered eye.
4th row; left, embroidered stomach; right, embroidered heart.
Bottom: insulin molecule.



EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
invites you to
LIVING BORDERS
Tuesday March 3
6 - 8 pm
ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS
TRAFALGAR SQUARE

new work by
Little Ilford Embroidery & Patchwork Group
The Palapase Association, Trinity Centre
The McGrath Makers (learning disabled group)
Kooli Kibaz Pre-School, St Barnabas Church
Essex Primary School

Exhibition runs from March 2 - 15

St Barnabas Church
Heritage Festival & Exhibition
Saturday May 14 2-4 pm
Sunday May 15 2-4 pm
Live Music, Heritage Lunch
Textile Workshops, Childrens Craft Activities

St Barnabas Church Textile Group
Little Ilford Patchwork & Embroidery Group
Maiden Park & East Ham Library Textile Groups

The McGrath Makers
Little Ilford School
Essex Primary School
St John Phoenix Primary School
Kooli Kibaz Pre-School

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
email: elta.textiles@gmail.com
tel: 0798 599 3191

Weekly Classes
during school term times
Monday 11 - 1 pm East Ham Library
Tuesdays 10.30 - 12.30 Stratford Library
(for adults with learning disabilities)
Wednesdays 10.30 - 1 pm Little Ilford Baptist Church,
Sheringham Avenue E15 2PA
Fridays 10.30 - 1 pm
School 360, Sugar House Lane, E15 2RB

All Welcome
from beginners to skilled
Classes free of charge with materials provided.
Just come along - no booking needed.

East London Textile Arts
runs textile, art and craft, and jewelry sessions for groups of adults with learning disabilities.
We have five years experience of working with people with disabilities. We provide tutors and assistants. All our workers are CRB checked.
We teach simple textile techniques, drawing, collage, papier mache, card making and other crafts activities

Current Classes
The Trinity Centre
East Avenue E12
Monday 10 - 12 noon
Thursdays 10 am - 12 noon

McGrath Enterprise Zone
McGrath Road, Stratford, E15 4SZ
Mondays 1 pm - 3 pm
Thursdays 10 am - 12 noon

St Marks Community Centre, Beckton
Friday 10.30 - 12.30

ART PROJECTS FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Re-envisioning John Frederick Lewis:
Interpretations in Craft and Architecture
Outreach Exhibition at The Art Workers' Guild

The Art Workers' Guild
The Watts Gallery
EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
come and join in!

Classes

Mondays
St Barnabas Church, Brooming Rd E12
10-12 pm - Open to All
Garden Cafe, Candy Rd, Custom House
10-12 pm - Open to All
4-6 pm Drawing and Painting - Open to All

Wednesdays
Little Ilford Baptist Church,
Sheringham Avenue
10-12 - Open to All
St Barnabas Church Knitting group
10-12 - Open to All

Thursdays
Maiden Park Association, Romford Rd
1-3 pm
Bathway Centre, Bathway Cross
1-3 pm - Open to All
Trinity Centre, East Avenue
1-3 pm - Open to All

All classes are FREE

For more information please phone
0208 471 2656 or go to
www.eastlondontextilearts.org

This project has been funded by the Skills Funding Agency and Transform Newham

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
www.eastlondontextilearts.com

East London Textile Arts is an independent organisation working in East London, set up by local people of different faiths and abilities to make textiles that combine the diverse traditions of the area.

A small project reliant on our own fundraising, we work in partnership with local community centres. Currently we run workshops for around 120 people a week, half of whom have learning disabilities.

Exhibitions and Projects 2017

Daniel Endeavour
(with Kooli Community Health NHS Trust)
Oxford, Bristol & Devon - The Helms Centre
September 24 - 27
St Barnabas Heritage Festival November 14 & 15

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
LIVING BORDERS
EXHIBITION OF TEXTILES
MARCH 3 - 15
GALLERY IN THE GROVE
ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, LONDON WC2N 4JH

WINTER ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR
LITTLE ILFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
SHERINGHAM AVENUE
E15 2PA
SATURDAY
DECEMBER 13
1 - 5 PM

Events include an exhibition of textiles by EETA, jewellery making, colouring competitions, card making, face painting and other family craft activities

FREE REFRESHMENTS
ALL WELCOME
FREE ENTRY

Our History

We began meeting and sewing at Little Ilford Baptist church around 5 years ago and have been making textiles ever since. In that time we have made a New Testament Hanging, Noah's Ark Hanging, (with a second version commissioned by a textile collector), and a Map of Newham. We also work on individual pieces and have made samplers, stuffed birds and hats.

Embroidered square from the Map of Newham

East London Textile Arts & Little Ilford Patchwork & Embroidery Group

Our group is part of East London Textile Arts which runs community textile groups in East London, working with people of all faiths and ethnicities, making artwork for exhibitions, festivals and open days.

All classes are free

For more information tel 0208 514 0717 or go to www.eastlondontextilearts.com

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
Little Ilford Patchwork & Embroidery Group
Little Ilford Baptist Church
Sheringham Avenue E12
Wednesdays 10 - 2 pm
All Welcome

ST BARNABAS CHURCH
Open Day
Saturday March 15
2 - 5 pm
Children's Games
Drinks & Cakes
Exhibition of Craft and Textile work
Music

All Welcome
Free entry

For more information please phone 020 8471 2656

We invite you to the launch of
HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR TEETH
a health education booklet by
EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
at
Manor Park Library
685-693 Romford Road
Thursday February 11th
10.30 - 11.30

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
PRINTED COTTON FABRICS
created from designs made by
THE MCGRATH MAKERS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

Future Projects & Exhibitions
Our Street Drive
St Barnabas Heritage Project
Spiders & Sparrows (environmental project)

Health Publications
Looking after your Teeth
Stories of Diabetes
to be published July 2016

Full list of publications, classes and events at:
www.eastlondontextilearts.com

Newham London

TALES OF DIABETES
STORIES OF TEETH

MONDAY 14 MARCH
6 - 9 PM
ART WORKERS' GUILD

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
Certificate
for completion of the
Kalila Wa Dimna Outreach Course
for
Embroidery and Drama Day
2021-2022
awarded to

East London Textile Arts
invites you to
THE WEAVE SHED

Transforming textile waste using ancient technologies.
Fridays 10.30am-1pm during term time
School 360, Sugar House Lane, Stratford, London E15
WELCOME ! EVERYONE ! WELCOME ! EVERYONE ! WELCOME ! WELCOME !

email: elta.textiles@gmail.com
instagram: @elatatextiles
facebook: @eastlondontextilearts
tel 0798 599 3191

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
invites you to the opening of
Deities, Beasts & Beauty
at The Helms Centre
18-19 Redgrave Road W11 1JH

Individuals, printed textiles, decorated papers & programmes by
Helms Centre, London
and Ancient Greek mythology

Thursday September 24
8.00 - 4.30 pm

For more information please phone
0208 514 0717 or go to
www.eastlondontextilearts.com

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
invites you to the opening of
PATCHWORK LIVES
at ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS
14 - 19 MAY

East London Textile Arts has 8 weekly groups working with around 60-70 people, male and female. For over three years we have worked with adults with learning disabilities. We also run projects with schools. This exhibition demonstrates the value of a sustained project that enables development of skills. The engagement of participants combined with professional design creates a show full of interest and insight.

www.eastlondontextilearts.com
theartworkersguild.com

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS
and
The Art Workers' Guild
Certificate
for participation in the
John Frederick Lewis Outreach Exhibition 2019/20
awarded to

Anne Thorne
Master of the Art Workers' Guild 2019

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

EAST LONDON TEXTILE ARTS

Some of the printed invitations, posters, leaflets, and fliers produced over the years, before social media became dominant. We also made Certificates of Participation for projects, especially valued by Learning Disabled Groups.

The McGrath Makers

& working with Learning Disability Groups

In 2010 while running a class at the Trinity Centre E12, a support worker asked if their group of adults with learning disabilities could join. This was the beginning of a partnership with Newham Social Services Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities that has continued until today. At first the group was small, but they soon became absorbed in stitching and were thrilled to see what they could make. More people joined and a coffee morning craft club was set up, which included those with limited motor skills and unable to use a needle. For them we developed paper crafts activities. This was run by ELTA's young project workers, Sophia Ramsay, Sandra Christopher, Carys Orphan, and Farheen Riaz-Irfan. It became a large, companionable weekly event with over 30 people attending, continuing until 2016. Work was tailored to the needs and interests of each participant.

Another learning disabled group took on their own name, The McGrath Makers, and they held their first exhibition at Prick your Finger haberdashery/gallery in Bethnal Green. This inspiring shop was run by Rachael Matthews (now a Leader of ELTA). Work from this exhibition found its way to the website of Pallant Gallery's Outside In project.



Dental project

The McGrath Makers became stars of the dental project, with lots of unhealthy food embroidered, as well as toothbrushes and toothpaste. When the work was exhibited at the Art Workers' Guild in 2015 it drew the attention of King's College Faculty of Dentistry lecturer Flora Smyth-Zahra. She brought students to a class to learn how to communicate better with adults with learning disabilities. Their textile pieces were shown at an Open Evening at the University, and featured in our booklet *Look After Your Teeth* which we created in partnership with writer and editor Marilyn Watts. One high point of the McGrath Makers history was when they were invited to participate in an exhibition in Vienna, with their piece *Death and the Jester* (bottom right) by Halima Begum, Donald Dunn and project worker Sophia Ramsay.

Exhibitions

All ELTA exhibitions took to including work by adults with learning disabilities. For the Epping Forest project many insects and butterflies were created, from which a chiffon scarf was designed, while tote bags were made from their animal designs.

The diabetes project featured dinosaurs, which in our picture book crawled around the body, experiencing all the problems of diabetes. Their embroideries were hung on small puppets and exhibited at the Art Workers' Guild. No-one guessed this was the work of disabled people.

A second McGrath Makers exhibition was held at Canning Town Library in 2019, where for a time classes took place. Holding an exhibition in the same building as classes meant that everyone saw their work exhibited, and everyone helped hang the show, which was accessible to families and carers of participants as well as local communities.



Textile Designs

From 2015 pieces of McGrath Makers embroidery were incorporated into textile designs which were made into clothes, and the group became embedded in the creativity of the whole ELTA project. The Four Friends (a deer, mouse, turtle and crow) from the Kalila wa Dimna fable were all embroidered and used to decorate a cloak, designed and made by Mary Spyrou. A fabric design was made from these pieces and made into a table cloth for the P21 Gallery in 2022. Some McGrath Makers - especially those with autism - did their own thing. Brian Meek spent one afternoon a week for two years embroidering a tiger, an animal he was obsessed by. This superbly embroidered tiger was used in ELTA publicity, made into a card, turned into a design and used to make a garment. Earlier, Arthur Locke had embroidered his obsession, Dr Who, which was exhibited at Prick your Finger. Halima Begum decorated whole lengths of fabric featuring her bird and elephant designs.



Trinity Centre Coffee and Craft

This was our largest class. It ran from 2010-16, growing from six participants to often over twenty, and needing three project workers to provide the teaching. Much thought and planning went into the individualised learning plans that were developed by the project workers, who came to have good knowledge of the interests and abilities of their participants, enabling wonderful work to be produced.



Outreach classes

ELTA taught outreach classes in community centres in many parts of Newham, including at Bakers Court, an old people's home, and a home for people with long-term mental health needs, where a mural was painted. A group for people with early-stage Alzheimers was enjoyed, as was a stroke recovery group at the Froud Centre (now Aston-Mansfield Community Centre).



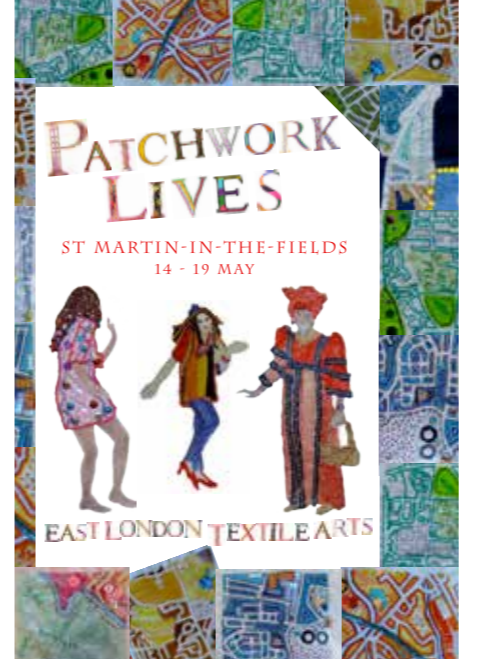
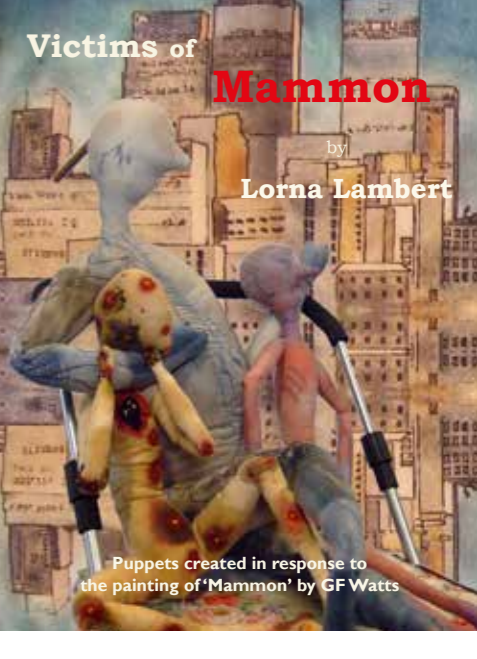
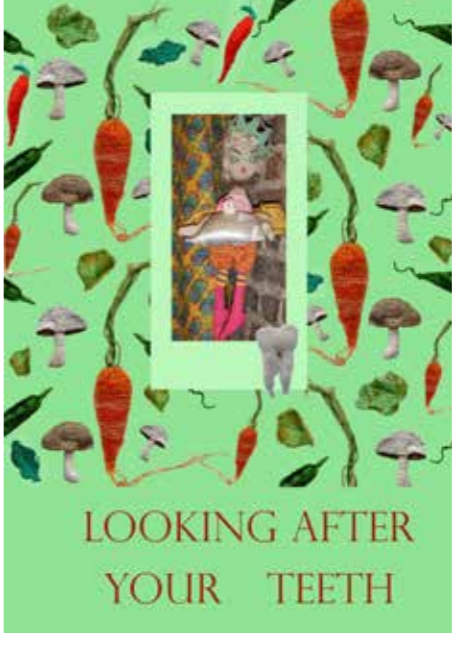
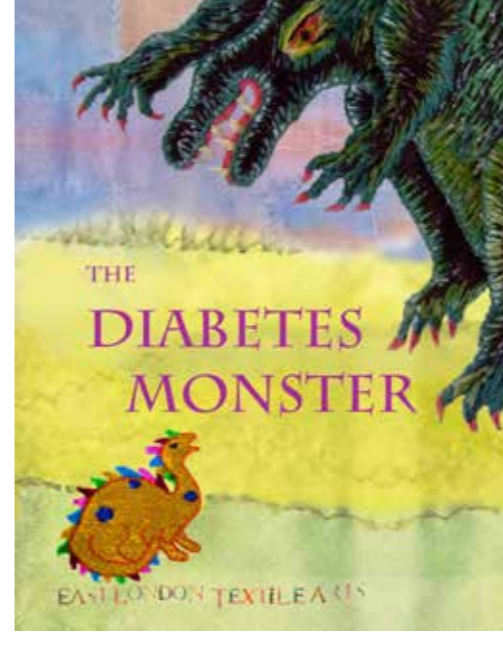
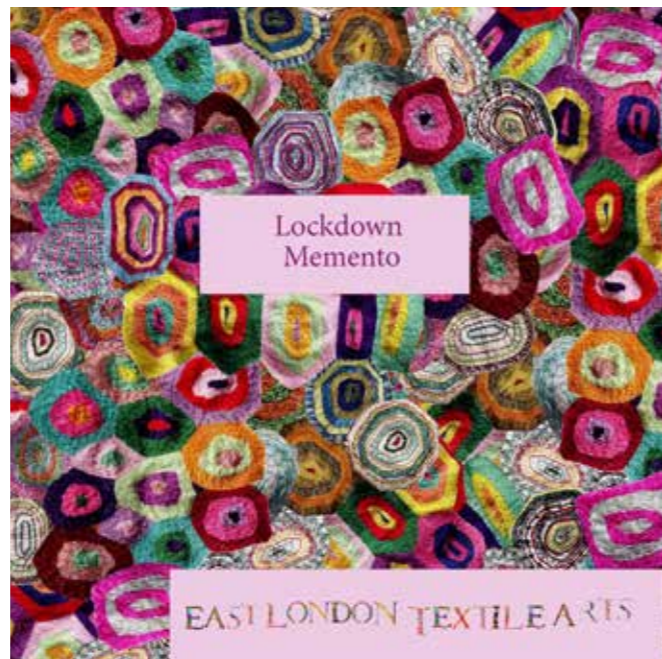
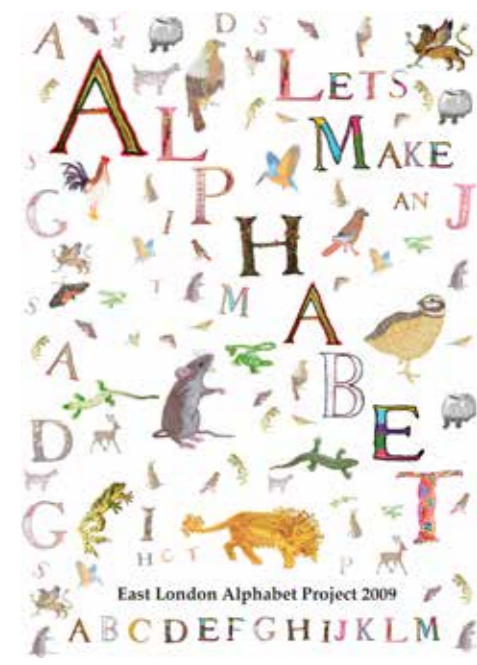
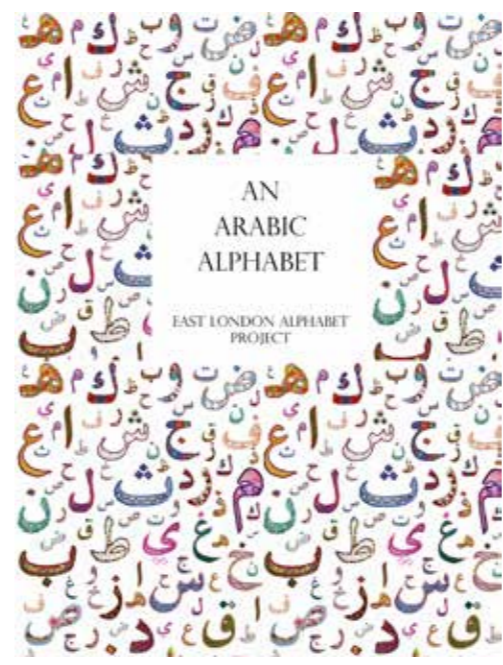
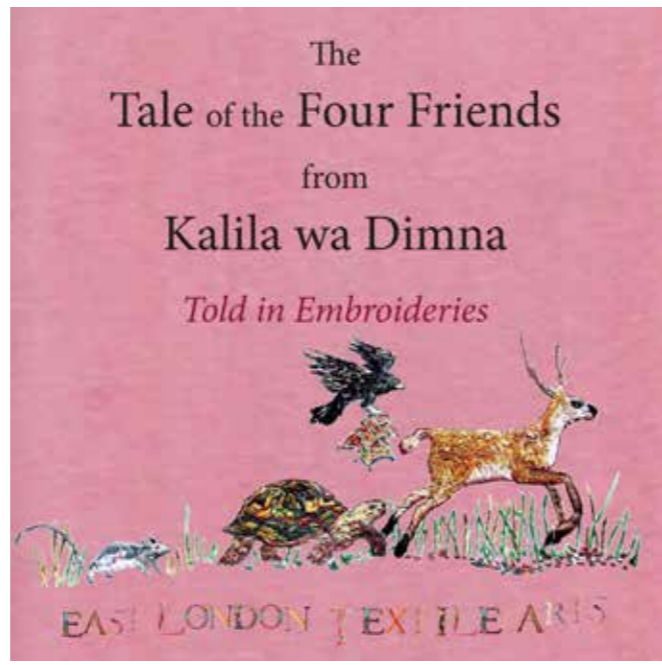
Jewellery-Making Classes for adults with learning disabilities were run in community centres around Newham. A little business was set up, selling finished pieces to family and friends.



East Ham Library fashion show: above, Donald Dunn wearing a jacket from *Yan Tan Tethera* project, designed by Sonia Tuttiett, decorated with embroideries by The McGrath Group; below, Sonia in T-shirt with design from embroidered tiger by Brian Meek.







From 2010, when our first booklet *How to Embroider an Elephant* by Lorna Lambert was printed, booklets recording the work of projects were regularly published. At the end of a project all participants received a booklet, with the remaining copies sold to the public. Previous pages: *Butterfly and Ivy* design by St Barnabas Embroidery Group.

Booklets were first printed on home computers and sewn by hand. Then they were printed by our friendly local Barking Prontaprint. We experimented with fine paper editions, but did not continue these as they were too expensive. We now use a digital printing company in Ireland specialising in small runs of high-quality digital printing.

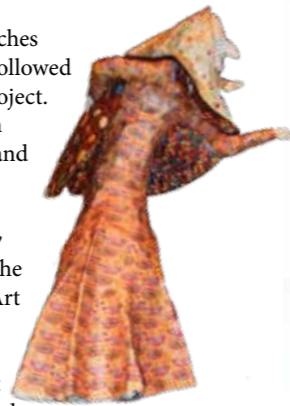
Puppets

Embroidery is a dynamic art form. In three dimensions it comes to life. These puppets show how embroidery can display character, describe feelings, and tell stories. From puppetry ELTA moved to fashion, illustration, and sculpture, creating different ways to communicate with the world about issues of current concern. We used them too to make new versions of classic tales.

Tooth Fairies and Witches

Our first puppets were various Tooth Fairies and Tooth Witches from the Dental Project, some small, others life-size. Then followed the life-size Greek gods and goddesses from the Hellenic Project. Right: small papier-mache *Tooth Witch* made with bad teeth patterned paper; far right, life-size *Tooth Witch* with rabbit and bird designs by the McGrath Makers, exhibited at St Martin-in-theFields 2015.

Middle row, left to right: *Tooth Fairy* with tooth; *Tooth Fairy* with health notice; healthy- and unhealthy-eating dolls by The McGrath Makers for Dissecting Diabetes exhibition at the Art Workers' Guild 2017; Little *Tooth Witch* hanging on life-size witch. Below left and right: *Goddess* and *Hades*, lifesize puppets from *Deities, Beasts and Beauty* exhibited at The Hellenic Centre 2015; below centre, Hellenic borders and textile design.



Puppets in later projects

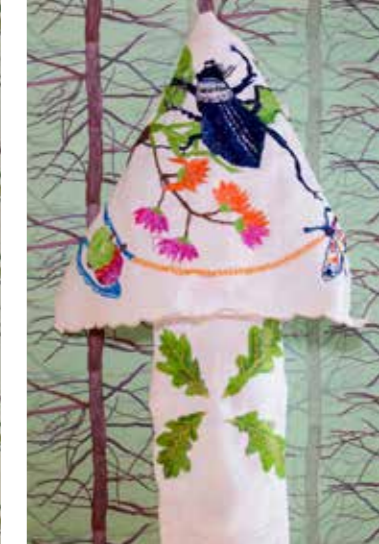
Sicily George made a small puppet highlighting problems of homelessness. She gave her puppet a small cardboard protest placard.

Our work was seen by the Unite Union, who asked us to make giant puppets for demonstrations for Save the NHS in 2015. We created *Hunt the Rat* (Health Minister Jeremy Hunt) and *Cameron the Cruel*. These were much photographed and used for publicity for local marches to save hospital services in Newham.

In 2016 we were invited to be part of The Watts Gallery exhibition about the Victorian outsider artist, James Henry Pullen. Puppeteer Rachael Warr taught puppet-making, and a trip to the gallery inspired a series of puppets that were shown at an Open Day at the museum. Lorna Lambert made a series of puppets inspired by Frederick Watts' painting of Mammon, showing Mammon's damage through a number of small puppets encircling a huge Mammon.

Small puppets were also made for the *Kalila wa Dimna* project. They decorated the courtyard of the Art Workers' Guild in the 2021 exhibition.





An exhibition of all the work from this year - long project, funded by Awards for All, was held in the Visitor Centre in Epping Forest.



Spiders and Sparrowhawks

A study of Epping Forest flora and fauna in partnership with The Friends of Epping Forest, 2016/17. Embroidering the natural world has been at the heart of embroidery for centuries. This project enabled us to continue delighting in the natural world. A series of naturalistic embroideries of birds from the forest were made along with embroidered studies of insects and butterflies. Other personal pieces included a box by Kang Sing Fung, decorated with leaves and insects of the forest floor. Sonia Tuttiett made a wild boar hanging (a reference to the past when these creatures roamed the forest) as well as an oak tree, and a hat decorated with forest fungi. Sicily George embroidered an old Victorian apron with forest creatures, which included animals from her home village in Southern India!



Clockwise from top left: *Decorated Box* by Kang Sing Fung; *Forest Top Hat* with *Spiders and Sparrowhawks* Hanging by all ELTA groups; *Horse Puppet* digital design using insect puppets; embroideries of butterflies by members of St Barnabas Embroidery Group; embroideries of bees, displayed on sock puppet; detail of *Insect Cloth*; 3D Imaginary Insect; *Forest Top Hat*; 3D Orange Imaginary Insect.



Fungi were studied as well as flowers and leaves. There was a trip to the forest, with a guide from the Friends of Epping Forest. The winter trees were turned into repeat backgrounds to show off details of embroidery, while a sprig of ivy became the design structure for a pattern of moths and butterflies. Many other birds, insects, butterflies and creatures are illustrated on page 14. Over the years ELTA has assembled a library of photographed images which can be incorporated into a wide range of ELTA designs, increasing the repertoire and speed of ELTA design. The finished embroideries were made into a quilt by ELTA's quilter, Sue Haigh.

Clockwise from top left: forest flowers and fungi on sock puppet with bird, butterfly and ivy textile design; fungi and ferns on sock puppet with butterfly and ivy textile design; oak leaves, forest flowers and beetle on sock puppet with tree design; *Forest Landscape* hanging by Cynthia Gibbons; *Ivy and birds* decorated paper; embroidered sparrowhawk; fungi on sock doll with decorated paper; butterfly chiffon scarf by Adults with Learning Disabilities group.



Overleaf: Donald Dunn in *Embroidered Waistcoat* with bird motif by Halima Begum; Josie Tuttiett with *John Frederic Lewis Needlepoint Bag* and *Octagon Gown* with ELTA fabric design lining.







Photo by Elle Sillanpaa



Photo by Elle Sillanpaa



John Fredrick Lewis & Orientalism

in partnership with the Art Workers' Guild and The Watts Gallery

This project was the result of conversations with the education department of The Watts Gallery. Together we decided to create work inspired by their exhibition about the Victorian painter John Frederick Lewis. His love of the Orient, together with the political issues raised by romanticising other races, seemed perfect for ELTA. The Art Workers' Guild became involved and we invited their members to join us in a project which ran over two years (2017-19).

The Wyvern Bindery ran a book-binding workshop making Japanese bindings. Flora Roberts designed a hanging embroidered by ELTA member Kang Sing Fung, while members of the Art Workers' Guild were invited to decorate octagons alongside ELTA work for a final show at the Guild. Paintings, prints, glass engraving, sculpture and designs for contemporary Islamic architecture were all part of an Orientalist show that filled every exhibiting space in the downstairs of the Guild building.

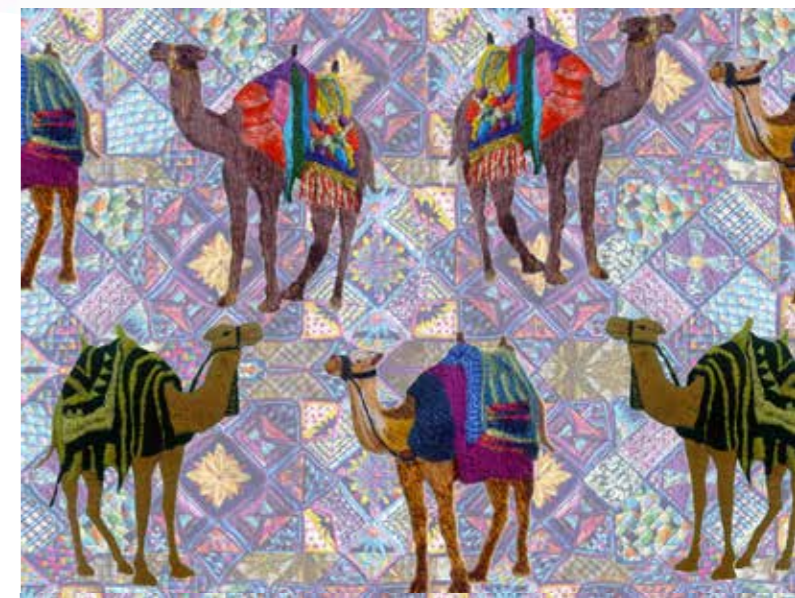
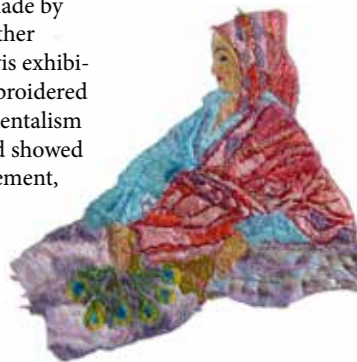
Alongside the exhibition were talks about diversity within the craft world, and the place of traditional textiles in contemporary urban life. Groups of adults with learning disabilities had clothes designed and made by Rachael Matthews from their own embroideries. Fashion photographer Elle Sillanpaa photographed ELTA clothes at the Guild, celebrating the beauty of older women of diverse ethnicities, who both made and wore the sumptuous clothes.

The Octagon Gown was the centrepiece of the project, created from hundreds of embroidered octagons made by dozens of people, both ELTA members and outsiders. The gown, designed and made by Sonia Tuttiett, together with other clothes made on the project, were shown in the central gallery of The Watts Gallery as part of their John Frederick Lewis exhibition. Karen Harris made a series of Paisley designs which embellished a blouse. A chiffon scarf was designed using embroidered camels. A dress was made from watercolour octagons of scenes from the current Syrian war, bringing the theme of Orientalism into contemporary life and questioning Victorian appropriation of the Orient. The exhibition at the Art Workers' Guild showed work by leading artists and craftspeople alongside that of the ELTA groups. This project developed its own outreach element, working with Subco, a Newham community group for older women of all ethnicities.

Clockwise from top left: *Octagon Gown* backview; *Octagon Gown* front view; *Bird Jacket* designed from embroidery by Donald Dunn; embroidery of oriental lady used on front cover of project booklet; embroidered camels used for scarf and card images; detail of *Camel chiffon scarf*; detail of *Paisley* paper design; standing oriental lady (front book cover).



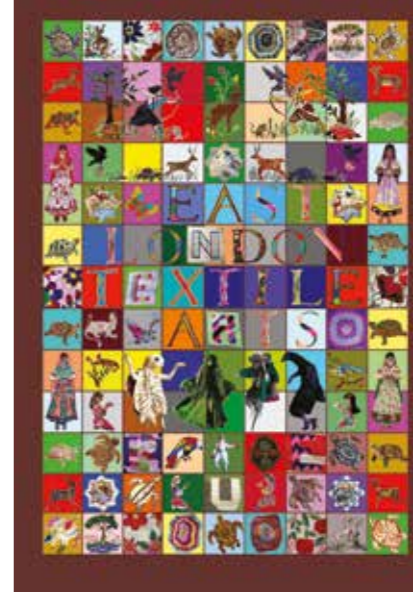
Clockwise from top left: chiffon scarf with octagon pattern; *Hemisphere Jacket* and embroidered *Elephant Skirt*; *Donald Dunn Top*; *Hemisphere Bomber Jacket*, with *Octagon Leggings*; detail of *Gold Octagon with Birds of Paradise*; *Paisley* embroideries by Karen Harris; detail of ELTA booklet cover design with embroideries based on John Frederick Lewis watercolours; detail of *Embroidered Octagon* by Sicily George; embroidered tiger by Brian Meek.





Kalila wa Dimna The Tale of the Four Friends

This project straddled the pandemic, from 2019-2022. It was set up by Dr Rachel Scott as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council project, *Language Acts and World Making*, to re-interpret an ancient fable about friendship and migration. Artists from around the world were invited to exhibit their interpretations of the fable, and ELTA was asked to work with Newham communities. A vast amount of work was embroidered, made into costumes, designed into patterns for fabrics and papers, and made into three booklets.



It became a perfect lockdown project, with embroidery kits delivered by Sonia Tuttiett on her bicycle. ELTA members opened their front doors as Sonia discussed their work safely from the street. The gaiety of the four animals was a cheering subject during this confined time. During the lockdowns Sonia organised, designed and finished costumes for the four animals and one hunter. The first booklet, *Lockdown Memento*, was followed by an exhibition catalogue accompanying the exhibition at the Art Workers' Guild, with a children's book created for the exhibition at the P21 Gallery in May 2022. The final show was at Stratford Library in November 2022, where all the work could be viewed closer to home.

A photoshoot was held at the Art Workers' Guild with photographer Frederic Landes and members of The McGrath Makers. In June 2022 Frederic photographed them performing the fable at Stratford library for the final exhibition of costumes.

A film, *Migrant Tales*, was made which featured people from Newham talking about their experiences of migration, illustrated with embroidery with musical soundtrack. This showed how embroidery can be the starting point for multi-media projects tackling major contempor



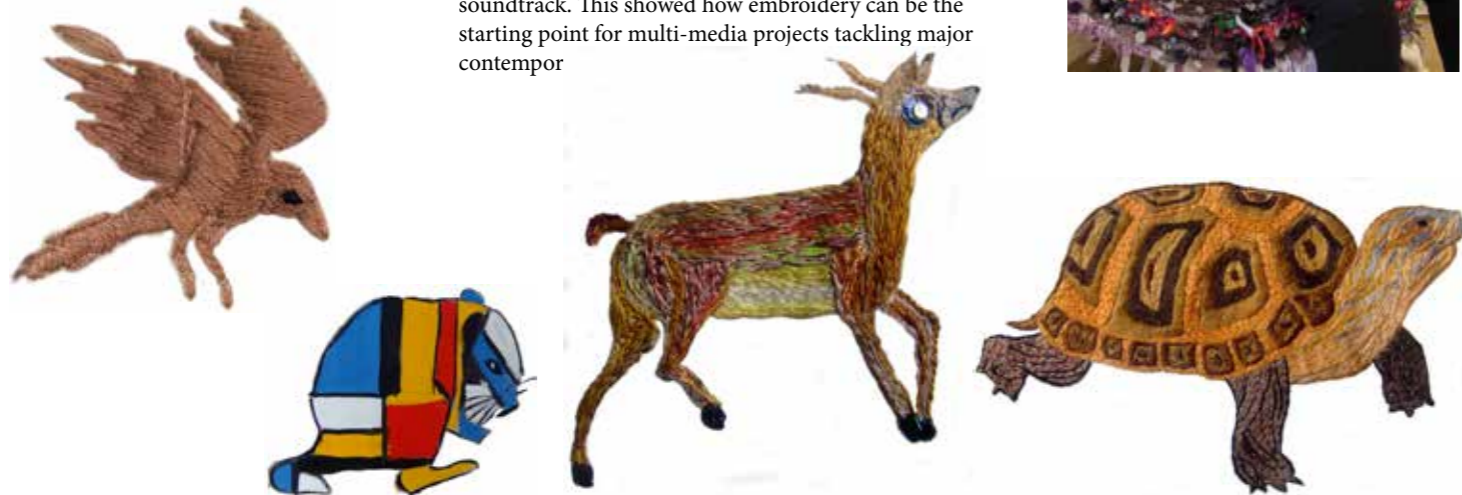
Above: Lorna Lambert's design of turtles, embroidered in lockdown by many different people. Above centre: tea towel that Lorna designed from the many different images that came from this project, plus letters from the 2008 Alphabet project and the female figures from a 2018 project at East Ham Library. The tea towel was sold in aid of the project.

Above right: Ramdas wearing *Crow Costume*. Felt feathers were distributed during lockdown to be embroidered however people wanted. Sonia then sewed them onto an old academic gown, and made the hat with more embroidered feathers.



Above: two of the many turtles that were appliqued onto the turtle jacket (see back cover), designed and made by Sonia Tuttiett. It was purposely bulky to look turtle-like and to enable as many people as possible, of all shapes and sizes, to be able to wear it. Like the Octagon Gown, it was totally hand stitched. Both are light to wear and very comfortable!

Below: exhibition in the courtyard of the Art Workers' Guild, September 2021 - February 2022. Left to right: *Hunter's Cloak*, linocuts on cotton fabric; *Deer Costume*, rag rug weaving with embroidery; *Turtle Costume*, embroidered jacket with printed dress; *Hunter's Cloak with Eyes* embroidered by members of learning disabled groups; on the wall, *Mondrian Hanging*.



Clockwise from top left: *Crow Top*; *Mouse Costume*; Sharon in *Turtle Jacket*; crow, deer, turtle and mouse (textile painting); The McGrath Makers performance at Stratford Library, final bow; *Turtle dress* and other costumes at photoshoot, Art Workers' Guild.



Fenella acting in the performance of *The Four Friends* at Stratford Library, June 2022. Overleaf: *ELTA Heritage Fabric*, one of five designs created for Newham Heritage Month 2023

All photos on these two pages by Frederic Landes



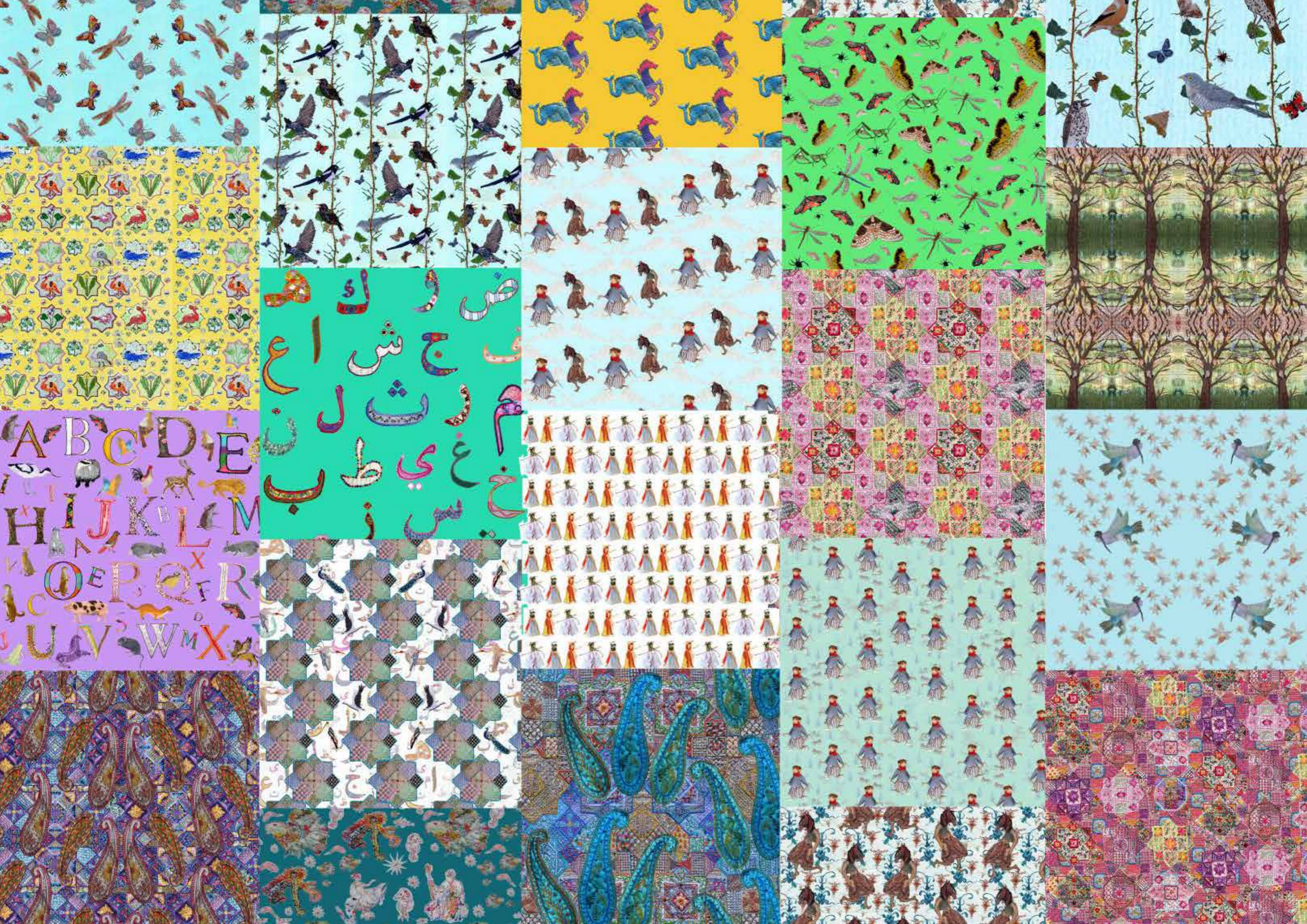




Photo by Andrew Brown

Our River, Our Lives

Left: detail from a pair of hangings made by Sue Haigh with embroidered ring-necked parakeets and other parrots appliqued onto a Japanese silk printed cloth. Below: Rekah Patel wearing *Parrot Tea Dress* with bag. Felt necklace made by The McGrath Makers, photographed by Andrew Brown from The River Roding Trust on the final project Open Day. The fabric features a circle motif by Sindy Jackson, designed for earrings. Parrot embroidered by Kang Sing Fung.

Photo by Andrew Brown



Working with THE RIVER RODING TRUST

SEPTEMBER 2021 - JULY 2022

This project crystallised after Sonia joined a Litter Pick-up Day organised by The River Roding Trust. It ran over a year with Little Ilford and East Ham Library Groups working in partnership with The Friends of the River Roding to highlight the need for clearing and restoring this local river. A study of invasive species was made, beginning with ring-necked parakeets, which were used to make fabric designs that were made into a kimono by Sameena Kazmi (right) and a parrot dress by Sonia Tuttiett (opposite page), while the originals were incorporated into two quilted hangings by Sue Haigh (opposite page left). Corn snakes (below) and geese were also embroidered. Clothes were photographed against a painted backdrop by local street artist Sleepy Realm (opposite page) shown at the final project Open Day. A spin-off project developed making Dorset buttons - stitching over a wire structure. These were designed into a fabric that was made into bags and a coat by Lorna Lambert. Another highlight of the project was the *River Dress* by ELTA member and costume designer Laura Holland (below right).



There were group walks along the river and talks about the Trust's work restoring the river habitats by Andrew Brown while ELTA members made refreshments for river clearing days. The project booklet featured members' poetry for the first time. Below: embroidered parrot by Sameena Kazmi.

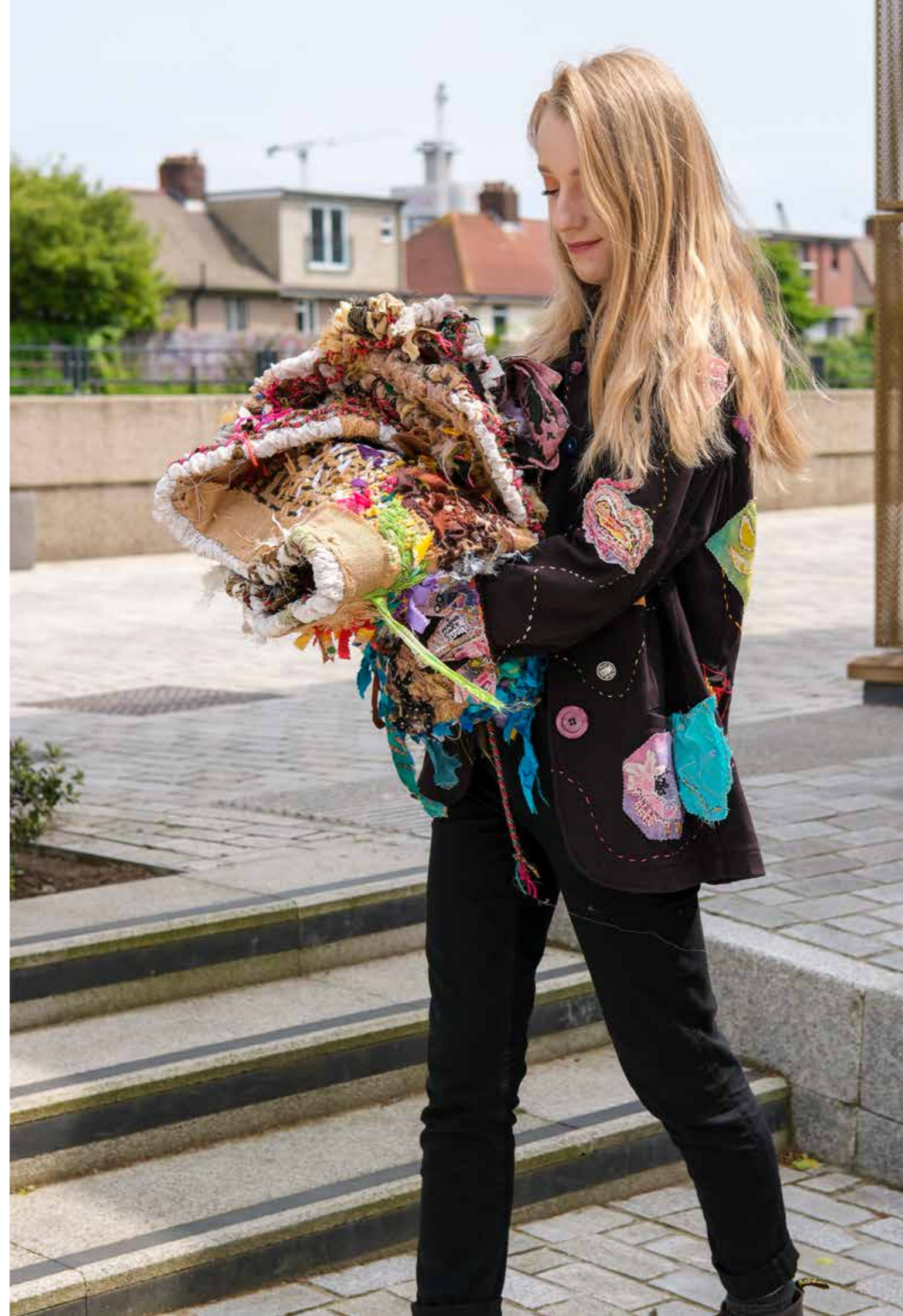


Photo by Andrew Brown



Photo by Andrew Brown





RaG-Time



ELTA takes to Rag-Rugging

Rachael Matthews, rag-rug maker, joined ELTA as a Leader in 2021. When our residency began at School 360, ELTA suddenly had space for storage and weaving classes could begin. Our aim was to introduce ancient ways of making, using affordable and portable tools and exploring ways to use discarded materials. A manifesto was created which focused on new ways of seeing unwanted fabrics.

To begin with we collected from the streets, putting clothes through our washing machines before using them, and cutting old socks into balls of yarn ready for use.

Participants started bringing their own fabrics to be ripped and added to the weaving. The quality of fabric collected was suddenly transformed by a donation of ends of rolls from London fashion designer Bella Freud.

Weaving for the River Roding Project

This was RaG-Time's first project, with most members learning the craft from scratch (a very different starting point to embroidery classes). At first production was slow, and numbers for the new class at a new venue were small (normal for the starting of any new community venture). But as skills and numbers grew, with more skilled members able to assist newcomers, the group took shape.

Looms and other Equipment

We use simple ancient ways of making. Our equipment is easy to make at home and our peg looms and weaving sticks were bought inexpensively off Etsy. The introduction of a cord winding machine meant that we could use old saris to make glamorous edges of things, and applying the Japanese art of Kumihimo we can use the cords as threads for the braiding of rope. We have made our own Kumihimo braiding stands, and can make very solid and beautiful skipping ropes for children in School 360.

Clockwise from top left: *The Rajah and the Rice Rug*; detail of *River Roding Rug*; enjoying the *Barking Riviera Rug*; *Barking Riviera Rug*; detail of *Prayer Mat*; *River Roding Mat*.

Previous pages: Radha Rajhan in *Octagon Gown*; Josie Tuttiett in jacket decorated with embroideries by The McGrath Makers, designed and made by Sonia Tuttiett.



RaG-Time Trip to the Experimental Weave Lab

RaG-Time Trip to the Experimental Weave Lab at The Clothmakers Company in the City of London, was the first showing of RaG-Time work. It was a day out, taking a boat up the Thames to the Experimental Weave-Lab to describe their unique design collaboration techniques on five major art works. Academics from University of the Arts, London and Curators of this festival, Elizabeth Ashdown and Philippa Brock, were intrigued to hear of our unusual and successful way of working. Philippa has now joined the project, coming most weeks, assisting teaching and introducing new techniques. Professional weavers who see our works are greatly concerned about the future of their craft, it having being cut from textile departments at most Art Universities. They believe community groups can have a central role in keeping this ancient and versatile craft alive.

After work was completed on the River Roding rugs, the group made a rug featuring an illustration for ELTA's project *Stories we Love*. The design was *The Rajah and the Rice* and was designed by Sonia Tuttiett. It was stitched with torn yarn into a hessian background. This way of working is a traditional folk craft, sometimes known as proddy, pokey or netty depending on where you come from.





Work by School 360 children

School 360 Residence

During the summer of 2021 ELTA was invited to apply for a residency at School 360, leaving Little Ilford Baptist Church which had been our base since 2017. With this base we were able to expand into weaving, which necessitates a larger storage space for its equipment. ELTA gained a beautiful workspace which meant we could take a substantial fabric donation from Bella Freud - invaluable to the newly set up RaG-Time weave class. Sonia runs a weekly textile after-school club. During the school's first year we worked with the school's artist-in-residence, Josie Rae Turnbull, to make a booklet of the children's work as well as cards and textile designs.

ELTA by Others

A century ago, key figures in the Arts and Crafts movement founded the Art Workers' Guild to promote craftsmanship, and to establish a community of makers and designers who could share ideas and a common understanding of skills. This remains at the heart of the Guild, and is why we value our association with the skilled craftspeople of ELTA. In turn, our history, and the varied range of disciplines represented in our membership, provide a wider and affirming context for ELTA. Meeting other craftspeople, and collaborating with practitioners of other disciplines, is always beneficial, and valued equally by ELTA and the Guild.

Prue Cooper
Past Master, Art Workers' Guild

My admiration following the visit I made to the ELTA embroidery group in Newham 2016 will never dim. The room of embroiderers was bursting with the most inspiring and beautifully stitched works – all designed to highlight health and social issues in the borough. This craft skill was enabling friendship and understanding between participants of many races and it was good to see that many of their final artifacts are recorded in pamphlet and book form. What Celia Ward and Sonia Tuttiett have achieved in founding this group is worthy of recognition.

Diana Springall
Textile Artist
former chair of both the Embroiderers' Guild and the Society of Designer Craftsmen.

The Small Grants Fund in Transform Newham was delighted to encounter and support ELTA in its early days with 3 years of grant of nearly £5k per annum. We particularly appreciated the way that the innovative and highly skilled staff and volunteers drew people together from different continents and different generations round a shared passion for textile arts and crafts. Even ten years on, I still quote the founder Celia Ward who said "our white East End elders were keen to learn mirror work from young neighbouring Asian crafters, and the young women wanted to learn knitting and crocheting from the elders! The mutuality was lovely and so was the joy on the elders' faces to know that their skills would not die out".

Matthew Porter
Personnel and Development Officer
Transform Newham
2010 to present day

Working with ELTA

I have worked on many community-based projects as a textile artist. What is unique about my experiences of working with ELTA is their collaborative and collective approach. Promoting and building strong relationships on a grass root level, with Newham's community, sustained over many years. This continuity has enabled participants, from diverse backgrounds, to be part of a project that celebrates diversity, through making in welcoming and safe spaces. The variety of projects and themes explored, the skills gained, and friendships made, strengthen ties in the community and enhance the life of these groups and the lives of its participants. Being able to share my knowledge and skills has been very fulfilling, as the participants are always open to the opportunity to develop and learn new skills, and to explore new themes. This has been achieved by the continuity of ELTA, its commitment to lifelong learning, through its ongoing commitment to its community, and their tireless quest for funding, to sustain ELTA into the future. The quality of the textiles created is a testimony to this, which have been exhibited in a variety of spaces, and celebrates the importance of community-based projects, and is a source of great pride to the participants.

Mary Spyrou
Freelance Textile Tutor,

The variety and beauty which was revealed from ELTA's reinterpretation of old traditional symbols were appreciated by many visitors. *Deities, Beasts and Beauty* showed that the unbroken thread of the Hellenic fabric continues to speak to the diverse world of contemporary London.

Dr Natasha Lemos
Member of the Executive Board of the Hellenic Centre

When we approached the founder of ELTA, Celia Ward, and Lead Textile Artist Sonia Tuttiett to collaborate on *Kalila wa Dimna Ancient Tales for Troubled Times* exhibition, we never imagined as curators the level of depth, elaborate and intimate work that the organisation will carry and grow to occupy the main hall of the exhibition with multiple installations.

Rania Mneimneh, exhibition curator,
Kalila wa Dimna, Ancient Tales for Troubled Times

I worked with ELTA in 2010 until 2016. As part of the ELTA team I learnt so much. I learnt to present and facilitate classes with Sophia and Carys. I developed my writing and blog writing skills by working on ELTA blogs. I learnt new computer skills, how to write grants and to be a part of something bigger than myself. I made lasting friends along the way and this also is one if not my most precious treasure from my time with ELTA. My most precious gift I will always cherish is empathy. Learning to value and respect the needs of human beings, regardless of their disability. I learnt how to help develop my skills as a person and also help learners tap into their own abilities by helping with arts and crafts and embroidery work. I worked at the then McGrath Centre, the Trinity Centre, Beckton Centre and also with the Little Ilford Group. I will be ever grateful to the Lottery commission, other community grants and the hard work of Celia for always ensuring that Sophia, Carys and I could keep going. This was at a very difficult time in my life but working with ELTA gave me something to look forward to.

Sandra Christopher-Brown
ELTA project worker 2010-16

Madge Gill



My Nod to Madge Gill

My first impression when seeing Madge Gill's art for the first time was shock. I expected to see delicate watercolours, sweeping landscapes or maybe chocolate box scenes. Wow, did I get that wrong. Instead I was presented with image after image of seemingly random doodles and floating faces, brightly coloured full to bursting embroideries and yards upon yards of don't-leave-any-spaces blank canvas artwork. I wasn't sure what fascinated me about her art or if I actually even liked it, but there was certainly something very compelling in her imagery.

I unashamedly wept whilst reading her biography. I felt her pain and heartache from birth, through her teens and the tribulations of womanhood. I understood on a deeper level, from personal experience, the feeling of abandonment and a shared fractured childhood. The need to seek comfort and solace in other ways. The need to release trapped emotions. The need to fill those black voids before they sucked you in and swallowed you whole. I had this feeling she and I would have been kindred spirits. I believe her compulsive need to fill her life with art was her way to escape, or avoid the realities of a tragic life, that fate had dealt her.

I was especially drawn to the ink on postcard drawings and decided to challenge myself by trying to reproduce one of the images, but using canvas and thread instead. I drew the image freehand with pencil then meticulously machine stitched the lines. I had finished the difficult-to-get-at parts and used a laundry marker for the larger solid areas. To frame and neaten the edges I used black bias tape. I was relatively pleased with the finished work and the overall effect I was striving for was achieved. I felt that maybe, just maybe, she was looking over my shoulder encouraging my endeavours. Thank you, Madge Gill, for new insights and a new way to channel negative emotions through the wonder of creation during my compulsive bouts of productivity.

Lorna Lambert
Community textile artist and designer.
ELTA member 2008-12, 2016-18 and 2020-present.

I was very struck by the members' sewing skills, and how the individual elements often come together in collective works. And how this reflects both the collaborative nature of textiles, as well as embroidery's use as a medium of radical expression; something documented by Roszika Parker in her book *The Subversive Stitch*.

from account of working with ELTA in 2021, for *Folded Life: Talking Textile Politics* research project developed in collaboration with Jill Winder and commissioned by the Johann Jacobs Museum in Zürich, by curator Grant Watson

What can I say about RaG-Time? We are a very friendly and enthusiastic group who use fabric that has either been donated or found (dumped on the street) that would normally end up in landfill to make pieces of art. The different ways to use rag are endless: weaving, proddy, knitting, braiding, Dorset button rings and pom poms are a few of the different techniques we have so far experimented with, and what we've discovered is that you can use rag in an amazing variety of unexpected ways. New members are always welcome, so if you have a free Friday morning why not come along and join us on our journey?

Sandra Elliot
ELTA member

ELTA's connection with the Trinity Centre dates back nearly 15 years. Its early period coincided with Trinity becoming a base for Adults with Learning Difficulties (ALD) and their carers. This was a time of great upheaval for ALD as Social Services began closing down their Day Centres and encouraging local services to provide 'care in the community'. My experience of ELTA was through its creative involvement with these adults and the most amazing results of their textile art. ELTA, unlike many services for this group, never underestimated their potential for high quality work, good enough to be sold alongside items made by the other ELTA craft groups, to subsidise the project.

When I became Chair of ELTA in 2014 I truly began to appreciate the amount of work that went into ELTA's development – the discussions on each group's particular area of focus, ideas for new areas of work, the opportunities that this extraordinary project generated. Throughout this booklet, it is clear that ELTA's achievements can only be described as remarkable. A small local charity that has survived on minimal funding has a breadth of experience and expertise that many larger charities would envy – and the ability to enrich the lives of people who are often invisible.

Isky Osman
Chief Executive
Trinity Centre, 1997 - 2017

Opposite page: Needlelace *Still life of Healthy Eating* from *Dissecting Diabetes* by Little Ilford Textile Group, designed and finished by Sonia Tuttiett; Endpapers: Sallyanne Wood in *Deer's Gown* with embroidered words: *Deer don't cross the road, the road crosses the forest*. Back Cover: Ade Adepitan of The McGrath Makers wearing *Turtle Jacket* embroideries by ELTA members, designed and made by Sonia Tuttiett. Photo by Frederic Landes

When Celia Ward asked me whether the Wyvern Bindery would like to hold a workshop for East London Textile Arts, little did we know that we would discover a real gem of creativity in Newham.

In the small hall of the local church, we found a diverse group of women all eagerly awaiting to learn some book binding. As this happy band were already familiar with the hand skills of sewing and tapestry making, Kaori, Kate and I found our class of 8 were soon absorbed in the Japanese book binding. We had brought a stack of marble paper off cuts, together with some bright coloured papers. These were eagerly siezed upon, and we enjoyed the wonderful feeling of shared excitement when new objects are born.

We were indeed fortunate to be, if only for a short time, engaged with this remarkable project, led by Celia and Sonia Tuttiett, that fosters, nurtures and encourages the benefits of making.

Mark Winstanley
Owner, Wyvern Bindery
1990 - 2020

Since being part of ELTA and its creative world, I have started exploring and playing with textiles in other parts of my life. I reupholstered my campervan using a broken sewing machine that was hanging around. I began to darn my socks and jumpers with bright, contrasting colours, reviving otherwise worn and old clothing, and creating enjoyable confusion with the tangled bits of thread that now hang around me. When the holes became too large even for grand lockdown darning projects, I turned to sashiko and other techniques learnt through ELTA. More recently, since leaving London, I have, with the help of others, started sewing protest banners using old clothes and fabric scraps. Our most successful was the banner we made for the protest to protect wild camping on Dartmoor (near where I now live), a photo of which made it into the Guardian! I am forever grateful for the experiences and inspiration of ELTA that set me on this journey.

Iona Ramsay
ELTA Chair
PhD Student, Exeter University

I have learned so much working alongside Celia and all our project members over the years. You can't get involved in a project in an area like Newham without getting excited and inspired by the cultural diversity of the community all around. We always try to produce designs that challenge and interest our groups. People's embroideries can be turned into so many different things. They can ornament a costume, or be photographed and turned into a fabric, form part of an illustration in a booklet or create a wonderful story for a film.

We have developed some interesting partnerships over the years that have led to some unusual and quirky work that has been much enjoyed and remarked upon. Our members have joyfully got used to embroidering all sorts of strange things: Kidneys and Rajahs, Diabetes Monsters and Zombie knives, street scenes and giant puppets. It's a wonderful thing as a designer to have a willing and talented group of embroiderers at your disposal, who will happily embroider anything you ask of them in vast quantities ... a hundred eyes, fifty turtle shells, thirty feathers ... a mischief of little mice to crawl over a shawl ...

Sonia Tuttiett
ELTA director, and Lead Textile Artist







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