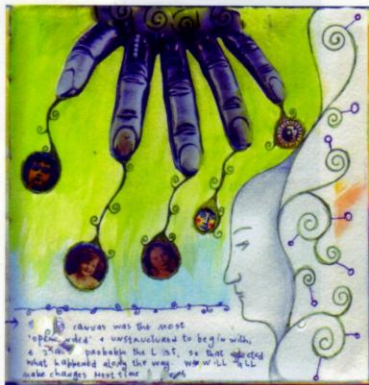
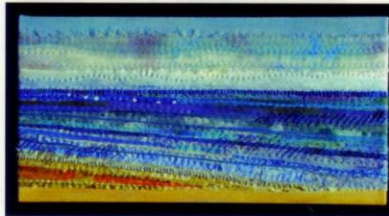




Ailie Snow



Based: New Zealand
Website: www.ailiesnow.com
Email: ailie@paradise.net.nz



The work of New Zealand artist, Ailie Snow, carries the kind of otherworldly element that one so often finds in memorable collections. Her cloth and stitch landscapes, handmade books, even her private journal pages, are testament to someone who observes the world with an open and inquiring mind and is able to bring those observations to life through insightful use of colour and a love of textiles.





follow your passion

Ailie Snow's work centres on textiles and books, with each form supporting the other in the artist's mind. "They work well together ... I love both," she says, simply. To Ailie, paper and cloth are not that different in terms of what you can do with them. "I tend to think of the work in cloth and stitch as my 'real' work and the books as a sideline," she explains.

In the past Ailie used to design and make wild, colourful knitwear. She was also a teacher of knitwear design and structure. Feeling that she had taken that work as far as she could and frustrated by the limitations that came with ensuring a garment looked good on a body Ailie went back to school to "gain new experiences, learn and expand the opportunity to work with others on the same path".

"I'm drawn to the sense of something gone before; the cloth passing through another's hands, being a part of their life and work, and I'm part of that continuum" - Ailie

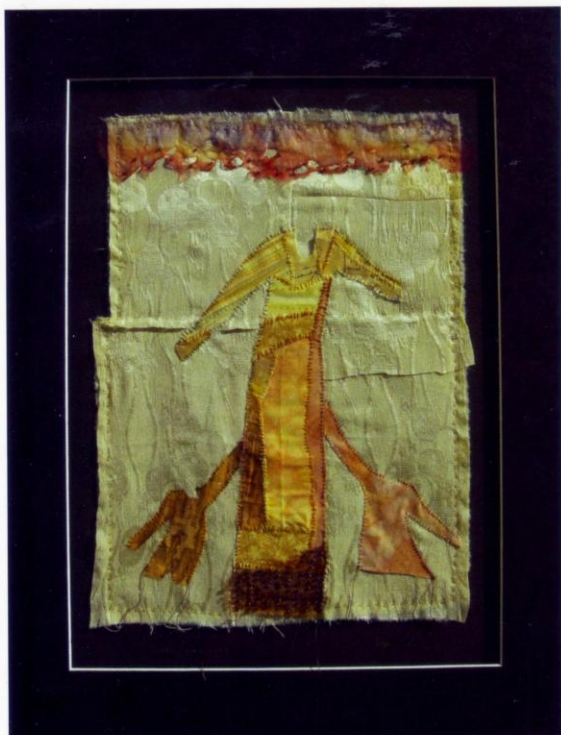
The process, she says, saw her work gradually change and develop into its current form.

"I use small strips and scraps of cloth, most often recycled ... old, worn, what others perceive as rubbish is my treasure," she explains, adding that she is now even the recipient of scraps from friends who are quilters.

"I'm drawn to the sense of something gone before; the cloth passing through another's hands, being a part of their life and work, and I'm part of that continuum. New cloth just doesn't have that feel or quality."

Ailie's technique employs very simple stitches, mostly running stitch, which "morphs" into seed stitch or into a long shading stitch or what she describes as a kind of suture. "I combine colour, pattern and texture to create colour, fields, or images," she explains.

Like many artists, Ailie's inspiration is in the air around her. "It comes from life, the act of living, experiences, awareness, observation, thinking, feeling," she says. "I'm also obsessed with the beauty of our world ... the local landscape or, more particularly,



artist profile

seascape. Sea, sky and land ... belonging ... a sense of self located in a sense of place. How it is to be in, or at one with, my surroundings." One only has to glance at some of her cloth and stitch works to see the colours and patterns of the ocean and the beach coming through clear and strong.

A dedicated keeper of journals, Ailie says she used to use her small tomes just for words. For a few years she kept small diaries with daily "non-dominant hand drawings". When travelling, she keeps journals for observing and recording, collecting ephemera and drawing. "Now I work and play in my journals very frequently, not quite every day, and sometimes in the middle of the night," she says. "They are a repository for anything and everything in my life

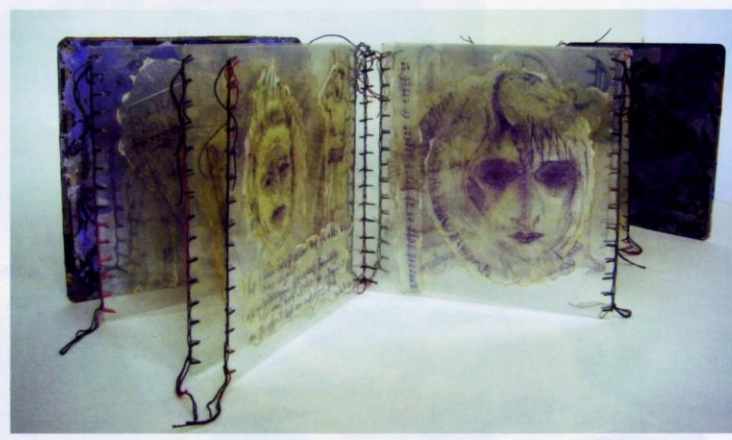
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- recording thoughts and feelings, happenings and events, ideas, doodles, junk, experimentation, lists, photos, quotes, etc. I also keep workbooks which are specifically related to my art practice."

Allie, herself, has also become part of a book. She is a featured artist in 'Stitch : Contemporary New Zealand Textile Artists' by Ann Packer. This is an inspiring and beautiful book which features over 50 artists whose works

range in style from finely detailed lace and woven beading to quilting, flax weaving and large-scale public artworks.

A teacher by profession, Ailie has taught in schools in New Zealand, Australia and the UK and has been involved in adult education for about 25 years. As an artist she has taught throughout her home country of NZ and is spreading her focus to teach in Australia and the USA. "I love the energy of being with a group of people who are interested in doing what I like to do," she says. "I love to watch what happens as I encourage others; to see their excitement as they discover what they want to do and how to do it. My classes are basically about sharing stuff I like to do and the things I've found out along the way, plus the



process of generating and developing inspiration and ideas. Most classes are based on creating with cloth and stitch, or the book arts, or a combination of both."

Like many artists we meet through 'get creative' Ailie says she doesn't have what can be described as an "average day". "I'm not disciplined. I work random hours but I work very hard and long hours when required," she says.

She has been exhibiting around NZ for around 30 years and, more recently, her work has reached the shores of Australia, the UK and the US. In 2003 she was part of the NZ Exhibition - Fashion and Embroidery Show - at Harrogate in England and, more recently, her work featured in

Ailie's favourite inspirational quotes:
"I am an aquatic person, a blue water person. I need the sea as some people need a cup of coffee."
- Charles Blackman (artist)

".... a quality of perception, a function of the imagination, a particular form of paying attention"
- Stanley Kunitz (poet)

'2006 Boundaries, Limits, Edges' at the Taia Gallery in Wellington (NZ). "So far it's mostly been group shows, plus a few solos," she says. "It began with knitwear in local shows in the late 1970s, right through to last week when I sent off a parcel to a show called 'The Book as Art : Beyond Words' in Seattle in the USA."

Via her website you can track Ailie's movements throughout the year. She presents examples of work from her entire repertoire, including some sample journal pages, plus breakdowns of workshop contents are provided, along with news, travel, exhibition and teaching updates. 