



“I TRY TO SEE WORKING WITH THREAD IN THE SAME WAY AS A PAINTBRUSH OR PENCIL”



Meet Liz Payne, a textile artist whose bright, embellished pieces are putting a modern twist on a traditional craft. Step into her colourful world...

What is ‘art’ and what is ‘craft’? For hand embroiderer extraordinaire Liz Payne they are unquestionably one and the same. “I think embroidery can have a stigma to it that it’s a bit old fashioned, or something that is just done as a hobby,” Liz says. “A lot of textile or fibre artists have had to push further to try to break free from this stereotype and slowly there has been a resurgence of these crafty art forms. People are opening up to the idea of textile art being considered more ‘art’ than just ‘craft’.”

BE IMPERFECT

Liz is challenging outdated ideas about embroidery by using traditional craft materials, but approaching the work in a more contemporary way. “In my art, I try to see working with thread in the same way as a paintbrush or pencil, but with the added bonus of also being able to introduce texture too,” she says. “I’m also not what you’d call a traditional embroiderer. My approach is definitely a more relaxed style. Again I’m trying to break that misconception that the stitches must be perfect, because mine definitely are not – for me, the imperfections are perfect.”

After high school Liz completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts degree and studied Graphic Design, working in both her home city Sydney and also in London. “When I got back home I began to experiment with painting onto fabric and then embellishing it with thread, wool, beads, sequins and fringing; I’m a sucker for anything embellished! I did an embroidery workshop once (where I finally mastered the French knot!) but most of what I’ve learnt are skills that I’ve picked up along the way through loads of practice, experimenting and a lot of trial and error.” Liz is influenced by a broad set of sources.



“I love gaining inspiration from the masters like Matisse and Picasso to Aboriginal Art, Ken Done, and all the amazing textiles and art from countries such as Guatemala, Mexico and India.”

BUILDING BLOCKS

When approaching a new piece, firstly Liz paints the fabric, “which itself can be a lengthy process!” she says. “I’ll have sketches around me, either drawn in a notebook, scribbled on Post-it notes, backs of receipts, important mail, or sometimes even using Photoshop or Illustrator. Other times, it’s a more free approach, letting intuition, pattern and colour take over what shape precedes the next. When the fabric dries, gradually I’ll start to build it up by adding colour and texture through a mixture of thread and wools, beads and sequins. I like to create a synergy of movement and dimension through these mediums. Each piece creates a harmonious energy and your eye dances around from one intricate detail and texture to the next. I use French knots a lot and I love the texture they can bring to a piece. I’m always trying to achieve a lot of texture in different ways in my work. Adding other embellishments like beading is something that makes my work unique too, and

because I stitch them on all by hand it also further reiterates the fact that no two pieces are ever the same.”

BREAK THE RULES

Liz is passionate about her craft and wants other people to see how accessible embroidery really is. “I think a lot of people can be turned off by thinking they’re not doing something correctly. I am by no means a traditional embroiderer in this sense! I think anyone can stitch, the same way anyone can paint, and I like to approach it from that angle. Don’t be so concerned about the ‘rules’ of embroidery.” It sounds like a winning formula to us,

and the end result is something that is totally unique. “People are really starting to appreciate something that is handmade – something that no one else has,” says Liz. It’s time to tear up the rule book. 🧵

MAKER PROFILE

Liz Payne

WHO IS SHE?

An artist creating textile artworks

WHAT’S HER CRAFT?

Embroidery

TOP THREE CRAFTY TIPS

- Experiment – practice makes perfect and you never know what you will discover!
- Accept the failures – I personally have a load of works that just haven’t come together, but accepting them and being able to move on and learn from that mistake can lead you somewhere else entirely.
- Embrace colour – because it makes you happy!

FIND OUT MORE...

lizpayne.com

[instagram.com/lizpayne](https://www.instagram.com/lizpayne)