

FLIRTING WITH YELLOW

BY LIZ PAYNE, TEXTILE ARTIST

WORDS BY SAMII LUND

If there is one thing I've learned in the 26 years I've lived, it's that needles and I do not mix. No, I'm not talking about the giant doctor-type monstrosities (although, yes, tears erupt like waterfalls when they're near) but rather, the teeny tiny sewing needles used to create lovely little artworks and tapestries. It's not that I can't hold one or know how to use one, it's just that the end product will turn out looking like something my good mate Elmo would have created after a big night out on Sesame Street drinking red cordial. Hilarious maybe, but not good.

That's why we leave it to the experts; like Sydney artist Liz Payne of Flirting with Yellow for example, who not only knows the craft of embroidery inside and out but also has an insane talent for putting together tiny stitches of creativity to construct works of art.

Liz put it perfectly when she stated, "anyone can stitch, the same way that anyone can pick up a paintbrush and paint! But I guess it's what you do with the medium that makes the difference."

With the world joining the crafty craze in the last few years, it's not unusual to walk into new friends homes to find an embroidery frame holding a delicate crafty project on the wall that they discovered in the local salvos. With there being a definite stigma attached to textile art in the past, it has no doubt become a very on trend craft in the current time, with more than a few artisans jumping on board.

However, when it comes to style, flair, bright, colourful and intricate, labour-intensive artworks - no one does it better than Liz Payne. Even the master of all things crafty Etsy thinks so, with Flirting with Yellow being awarded the prestigious Etsy Design Award in 2015. "To win the award was an amazing achievement for me. Through Etsy, I have been lucky enough to gain a lot of exposure which has turned into commissioned work."

Set far apart from any other textile artist we have ever seen, Liz has the knack of meshing mediums as if they were always meant to be together. Sequins shouldn't mix with fluoro paint and woollen thread, right? Wrong. Somehow when Liz picks up her materials; magic happens. Not only is it more than OK that sequins are making an appearance together with the bright colour of fluoro pink, but they also seem to be getting along rather well with the addition of several other mediums such as beads, thread, fabric and every bright colour under the sun. It's a party, everyone is invited, and low and behold, everyone is loving it! Crazy. Beautiful, creative madness.

The almost cartoon-like, 3D aesthetic of Flirting with Yellow artwork amuses my inner child while the intricacy of the detail could have me staring for days on end appreciating the time and complexity of each stitch. Each one of her works starts as a hand-painted masterpiece built upon with layers of gorgeous embroidery techniques and materials, which changes the confounded judgment of needlework.

"I love using thread as a part of my work because I do like breaking the misconception about the medium being dated, and I like showing it in a new light. I also love the physical practice of stitching and working with thread as a replacement to a paintbrush to add colour & texture to a piece."

It's not only artworks that Liz creates; there's also items such as hand-embroidered shoes and jackets each magnificently designed and put together that even Kanye would be jealous of you walking down the street in them...and we hear he doesn't even like colour.

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