

Tamara Russell – Textile Artist

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I am a Textile Artist specialising in free machine embroidery, hand stitching and mending. In my textile art practice, I explore my surroundings and interpret what I see through the medium of embroidery. My work has been exhibited in the United Kingdom and Australia.

My practice engages with the natural environment recreating the images and shapes in my embroidered works in 2 and 3D form. In my art work I am able to portray my concerns around social issues including climate change, the environment and the treatment of asylum seekers in Australia. I find textiles to be a perfect medium for expressing my thoughts using both hand and machine stitching.

In creating my work, I use up-cycled, recycled and reclaimed materials which I source these from family, friends, furniture shops, charity stores and industrial waste sites. Wherever possible, additional materials are 100 percent natural, produced sustainably and sourced locally.

The joy of working with found materials is the unexpected uses that can be found for them. I love this unpredictability and enjoy the inventiveness necessary to transform them. The materials not only highlight a need to address the amount of waste we produce, but also contributes to the story. I try to always use materials that are reclaimed, things with a history that have been discarded and might otherwise end up in landfill.

I have been making, altering and mending my clothes since a teenager. Loving to personalise my wardrobe with visible mending and embellishment. I accept commissions to mend people's old favourites along with designing workshops teaching participants how to mend and revitalise the clothes they already own. The workshops aim to address the 6,000 kilograms of used but still wearable clothing that goes into Australian landfill every 10 minutes. By getting people to hold on to their clothes for at least 9 months longer reduces the water, waste and carbon footprint by up to 30%.

I also run workshops in machine and hand embroidery to take creativity to new levels.