

HOW ABOUT?

with Louise Howland

In this issue, Louise explores the world of colour – in all its shades!



My creative partner is colourblind. Despite the difficulty in distinguishing colours, he is,

amongst other things, an artist. He is also able to eye-match threads, seeing tonal variations not easily discerned. I don't know what he can and can't see, but I hope it's not a pallid or faded-looking world for Keith; for beholding the universal spectrum of colour gives a joy and fascination that I wouldn't want him to miss.

Okay, so I admit it, I'm somewhat possessed by colour. Do you think, to some extent, it's a craving for involvement with it that leads us to our passion as craftspeople? Whether it's the blend and contrast of quilting fabrics, the subtle shading of a thread painting or bold beadwork, colour is a part of our creative obsession.

People visit our showroom seeking hues. We assist clients in their choice of shades, whether they're for passimentaries to decorate the interior of a yacht, or maybe to stitch a baby blanket. Carmine or cherry? Ruby, crimson or deep damask? The reflective nature of colour means that, when it is illuminated, it imparts some of itself to whatever is around it. So we blend and weave, highlight and contrast, with thread, beads or fabric, in diaphanous silver and glistening turquoise against indigo.

Colour brings out form. Fine backstitch in single gold thread edging satin-stitched lilies, provides definition instantly. Shadow trapunto in its delicacy depends on confident use of 'shy' colour.

Colour is the main reason that, 23 years on, I still adore working with textiles. Our thread colours are my 'children', each named, blessed and watched with pleasure as they leave the nest to boldly travel the globe.

Apparently, green occupies most space in the spectrum visible to the human eye. This may be why most thread companies produce more tints, shades and tones of it than any other hue. In nature, green pervades and for many people, natural greens bring peace and rejuvenation.

Culturally and individually, there are great differences in people's perception of colour and the emotions associated with it. To the Cherokee, red can mean east, the colour of fire, blood and victory. To a car buyer, red may represent high-energy and speed, while a single red

rose says 'I love you deeply'. In colour therapy, red is supposed to stimulate brain activity and increase the heart rate.

We can become set on using certain colourways in our lives yet time passes just the same. But enormous stimulation and pleasure may be had from looking at things afresh. This beauty is everywhere, and it's free! For instance; running to turn off the sprinklers, my gift was a resplendent array of shades in the just-watered vegetable garden. Against the light of the setting sun glimmered earthy beetroot reds, bordering rhubarb and chard. Behind feathered ferny grey-green asparagus waved golden King Edward leaves. Yellowing potato leaves? If I recall, that means time to dig them up, so until next time, remember that the work will wait while you gaze at the rainbow.

Till next month,

Louise

