

50 Plus

**Celebrating 50 years of Tamworth Regional
Gallery's Fibre Textile Collection**



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50 Plus: Celebrating 50 years of Tamworth Regional Gallery's Fibre Textile Collection

Essay written by Dr. Roslyn Russell

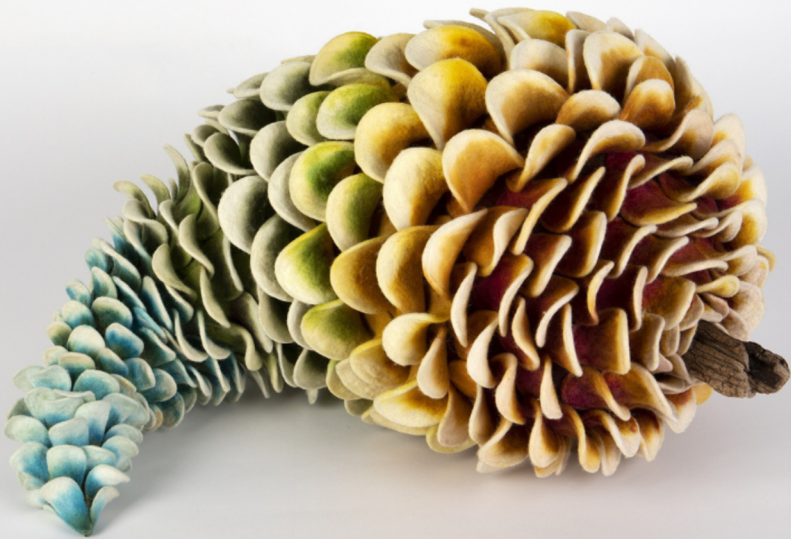
The Tamworth Fibre Textile Collection was born in the early 1970s, an optimistic and exciting time, when a small group of determined and foresighted Tamworth people began promoting craft, and particularly fibre- and textile-based art. The collection developed from 1973 onwards through acquisitions from exhibitions, notably the Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial (now Triennial), and independent sources. Many fundamental changes in fibre and textile art practice for nearly 50 years, including the use of non-traditional materials, techniques and technology, are now demonstrated in the collection.

This nationally significant collection contains works that document the changes in textile practice over the past half-century, by artists such as Jutta Feddersen, Margaret Grafton, Anne Greenwood, Rita Hall, Barbara Huntington, Dulcie McLennan, Liz Nettleton, Sybil Orr, Joanne Payton, Robyn Taylor and Liz Williamson. The collection enables comparison and contrast of textile practice across different time periods, providing the chronological mapping of changes that have occurred in that practice and unique insights into textile artists' responses to their time and social context.



Image: Robyn Daw, *False Iuddite*, 1990-91 Wool, 430 x 610mm, National Textile Collection. Donated by Ian Friend (partner of the late Robyn Daw). Photography Tamworth Regional Gallery.

Artists – including fibre textile artists – now use their art to express identity and diversity, and to make social and political statements to raise awareness of contemporary issues such as threats to the environment. New materials and shapes have entered the field, and innovative techniques are now employed to create artworks that push the perceived boundaries of the artform. Pam de Groot pushes the boundaries of felt making, whilst Cecilia Heffer explores new definitions of pattern and space in contemporary lace design. Jeanette Stok translates a traditional Norwegian embroidery technique to galvanised wire. Tamara Russell and First Nations artist Adele (Waabii) Chapman-Burgess combine clay and ceramics with fibres to create three-dimensional works, raising concerns about environmental damage, or making connections to country and traditional practices by First Nations people.



Raquel Ormella combines text with scenes from traditional landscape paintings and environmental protest movements in a creative form of social intervention. Louise Tuckwell's work strives for balance and harmony in geometric patterning. Beth Hatton and Robyn Daw's works deliver powerful narratives about the effects of colonisation on Australia's biodiversity and species loss. India Flint, a pioneer of environmentally conscious textile practices, combines eco-dyeing, botanical alchemy, and slow stitching to create her works.

Tamworth Regional Gallery's fibre textile collection, amassed over half a century, constitutes an historical record of an evolving artform, and demonstrates the potential of fibre textile art to communicate strong messages to audiences.

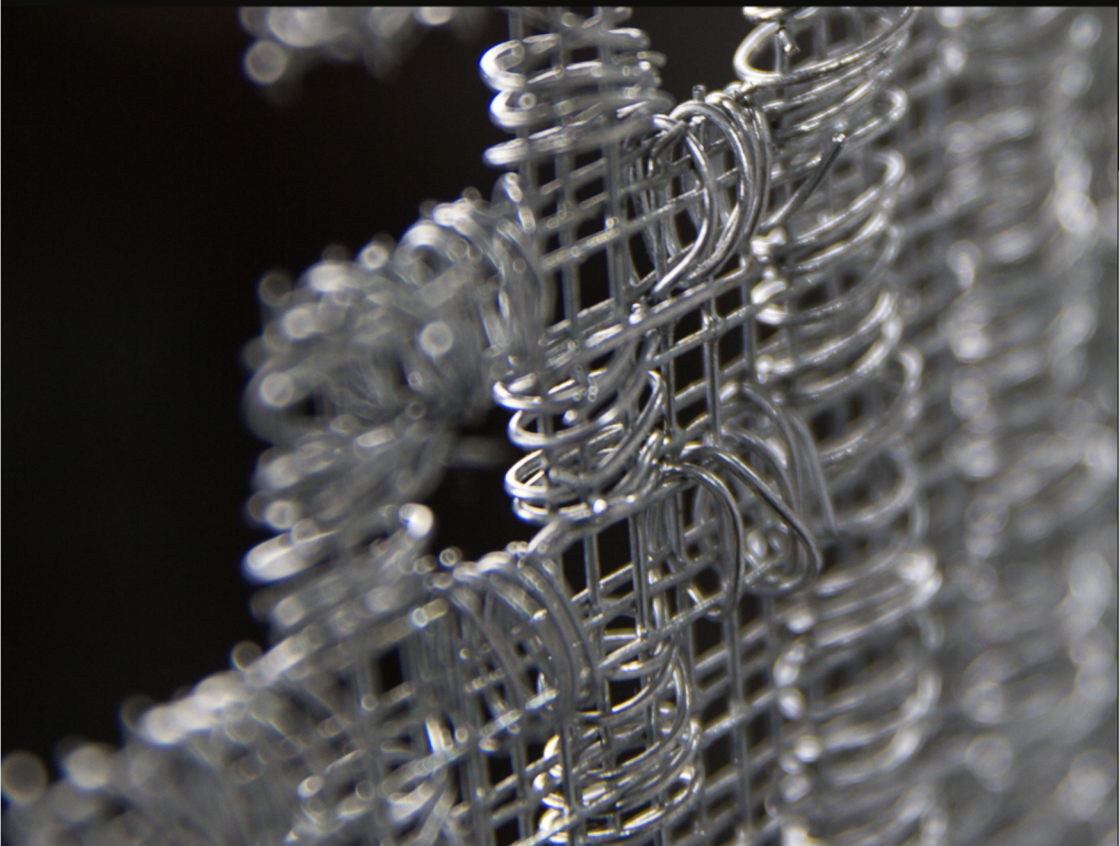


Image: Jeanette Stok, *Inherited Borders*, detail 2017, Galvanised wire, wire mesh, Each panel 1800 x 440mm. National Textile Collection. Purchased by Tamworth Regional Gallery Friends. Photography Michelle Vine.

Cover image: Adele Chapman-Burgess, *Guurrama-li (Resist, stand strong)*, 2022, Clay, glazes, gold paint and raffia, 140 x 210mm. National Textile Collection. Purchased by Tamworth Regional Gallery Friends. Photography Tamworth Regional Gallery.



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**textile art
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Ararat Rural City

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Ararat Gallery TAMA is a cultural facility of Ararat Rural City Council