

Stitching and Beyond Inc Annual President's Report, 2020

It is my pleasure in this annual report to say that again this has been a year of artistic endeavour and growth for our members.

I am confident I speak for all of you when I say "thankyou" to the team of volunteers who keep our organisation moving along with such excellent outcomes – your committee members (especially our long term treasurer), the *Latest News* team who flip that email into your inbox on an almost weekly basis, the people who organise the Challenge and especially the workshop organisers. I must also say there are members who, while they hold no officially named role, are generous with their time, thoughts and perspectives when particular issues arise. I have been very encouraged that when I called for some new faces early this year, there was such a positive response, and I sincerely hope that generosity will be ongoing so we can add some new faces to our official Committee at the AGM. I do remind you all if we each take a turn in carrying out various tasks according to our diverse skills and aptitude, the group will continue to flourish; to loosely quote one member, "we will not lose our awesomeness!"

The highlight of our last year has been an unbelievably successful *Out of Hand* exhibition, held at the Long Gallery 25 September - 6 October. It was opened by Cheryl Martin, member of the 62 Group who had just finished leading a workshop for us. It was a perfect evening with such a wonderfully diverse array of original textile art on plinths and around the walls, delicious food and wine, a huge crowd, the doors onto Salamanca Place wide open, and Cary Lewincamp's music flowing around us all. You can justifiably be proud of this event, and clearly the record 1173 members of the public who passed through are a testimony to this. In addition, the Sidespace was filled with two displays of Challenge pieces, *Tasmanian Textures* and *The Spice of Life*, as well as displays and sales by working textile artists from our group. Thankyou to all the hardworking members of the exhibition committee who seamlessly organised every aspect.

We have continued to hold monthly meetings every third Monday at B Block Kingston Adult Education (previously LINC), and (usually) on the Thursday or Sunday of the first week of the month at the Friends' Art Studio, North Hobart. All meetings have been well attended, and those attending continue to enjoy sharing the textile knowledge, creations and discoveries of others at these meetings. New members have said how they enjoy the welcome they have received.

Indeed, our membership is very special; may it ever remain generous, welcoming, supportive, and most of all, willing to share knowledge and skills.

Our 2019 Challenge, *Tasmanian Textures* is currently touring the state. Principally, the Challenge organisers are trying to have these pieces displayed in more distant locations to expose viewers to the excitement of textile techniques to which they would not normally be exposed. The 2020 Challenge, *Emerge*, has been announced, and we look forward to yet another intriguing collection.

Membership was a little down to 167 from the previous peak of 182 reached at the end of the financial year. It currently stands at 139, our usual level for this time of year. Our ethos is to support and encourage current membership to explore and develop textile techniques, not simply to boast of ever higher numbers and cope with the implications of an ever growing membership. This is why both of our monthly meetings this year are principally focussing on sharing discussion, asking questions, deepening knowledge, being inspired by talking about exhibitions, books, and sharing the excitement of the outcomes of workshops completed both online and face to face.

We have offered another wonderful year in terms of learning via workshops and informal learning situations. The Friends' group held a number of Sunday explorations which people have enjoyed, although at times the number attending did not always justify the preparation involved. 2019 saw another line up of excellent quality tutors, drawn from local, mainland and international sources: Gail Stiffe (bookmaking and innovative printing using a pasta press), Alys Midgellow-Marsden (textiles and metal mixed media), Kathryn Harmer Fox (creating images with machine and textile), Cherilyn Martin (experimental hand embroidery to explore mark-making, colour & composition), Dionne Swift (drawing for textiles and paper) and two 6 week programs by Joy Allison (drawing and mark making). One felting workshop was cancelled by the tutor.

Latest News continues to be published about every 7 to 10 days (apart from mid December to mid January). This is the way we officially communicate, so do make logging in and opening it a priority. Thankyou to all editors, past and present.

The website is currently being significantly refreshed, and we look forward to its imminent launch. With this will come more reliable email delivery and many other smoother functions.

Again, we have taken an active role in financially supporting textiles in other arenas. We donated to the Tasmanian Quilting Guild (the Art Quilt section at

Island Quilts). This was won by one of our members, Trish Wykman. In addition, it has been our great pleasure to support Trish's project, GIVING HANDS TASMANIA, associated with the South Hobart Women's Shelter through the donation of a roll of batting. Some members are also donating time and materials from their stash to make quilts for the project.

It has been my absolute delight as your president to share the ongoing excitement and pleasure in our individual textile related journeys expressed by members each month. I have especially enjoyed witnessing the continued growth of artistic expression of individuals and I am thrilled to witness the exhibition and publication success of some members interstate and overseas. May 2020 be kind to us all; create your hearts out, and make lots of original textile deliciousness for the 2021 Biennial just over the horizon!

Chris Hussey
President
Stitching and Beyond Inc.