



A giant lace installation is created live at *Yan Tan Tethera*, Cecil Sharp House

# The Crafter:

## *words from the craft world*

Everyone loves a good catwalk show – perhaps it’s the spectacle and theatre of the thing – and **Royal College of Art MA** fashion show is always a good bet. I saw some of the pre-show work with tantalising evidence of laminating and lace stitches, but here was the real thing, edited down to its essence. The show was moved from the cramped Royal College gallery to the main space, involving a convoluted path for the models to take. Ge Bai’s models wore glasses that weren’t just rose-tinted, they were the shape of roses too, so we were worried they might bump into something. Neons and pink with laminated surfaces and chevrons were much in evidence. Chloe Orange showed practical, textural knits and lovely draping machine knit stoles. It is also the last year with **Wendy Dagworthy OBE** at the helm, so as a tribute to her there was a special display from alumni from the college including Xiao Li who won awards last year for her silicone knitwear designs.

Off to the press breakfast for the new **KNITWEAR Chanel to Westwood** exhibition at the **Fashion and Textiles Museum**. I can’t wait for this to open as it will be full of old friends and some lovely new things too. Here’s a tiny taster: a Miss Mouse design (aka Rae Spencer Cullen) from the 1970s. There I met the lovely Debbie Bliss who was sporting one of her new range of products, a gorgeous bag with a stocking stitch pattern in a tasteful grey.

Next stop was to **Cecil Sharp House** to listen to folk songs and knitting both at the same time, two of my favourite things. David Littler curated *Yan Tan Tethera*, part of the Museums at Night programme of events, while the knitting was in the safe hands of Rachael Matthews from **Prick**

**Your Finger.** The name refers to a counting system used to count sheep or stitches in the Lake District. Much of the knitterati came out for the occasion including Freddie Robins, Amy Twigger Holroyd of *Keep and Share*, Max Alexander of *Max’s World* and Fleur Oakes (she of exquisite stump work). Between us we managed to teach Sarah Corbett of *Craftivist Collective* to crochet – quite a coup.

Artist **Shane Waltener** was there directing ‘bobbin dancers’ who wove ribbons while they danced – a kind of larger than life weaving. They did this on the main dance floor but also up and down the stairs creating a large net in the stair well. Well, why not?

The loveliest part was the singing. Choirs from all over London had got together and wandered around the hall singing as we stitched. According to Rachael, “Traditional songs and dances enabled knitters to throw themselves into a bigger rhythm, draw big breath and re-acknowledge their work-mates.” I learned a new song about Tarry wool – I think this means tangled. *“Tarry Wool, oh tarry wool/Tarry wool is ill to spin/Card it well, oh card it well/Card it well e’er ye begin...Who’d be king, can any tell/When a shepherd lives so well/Lives so well and pays his due/With honest heart and tarry wool.”*

Miss Mouse design c. 1970s from the upcoming **KNITWEAR** exhibition



Rachael Matthews of **Prick Your Finger** and Fleur Oakes

Xiao Li’s silicone knitwear



Chloe Orange’s MA catwalk show



RCA Fashion Womenswear MA student Ge Bai’s neon knitwear



Sneak peek at the upcoming exhibition at the **F&T Museum**