



PHILIP CLARKE

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

AUDREY WALKER AND ROZ HAWKSLEY

Above: Audrey Walker and Rozanne Hawksley in conversation

Opposite, top: Audrey Walker. *The Hidden Man*. 2003. Hand and machine embroidery

Opposite: Rozanne Hawksley. *Madonna... Eternal, Universal* (detail)

AUDREY WALKER was born in West Cumberland in 1928. She studied painting and drawing at Edinburgh College of Art and at the Slade School of Fine Art. Ten years after leaving the Slade she began to make embroideries and was an early member of the 62 Group. In 2003, her triptych, *No Evil* was awarded Most Outstanding Exhibit in art of the STITCH and her recent work was also shown at the SOFA, Chicago. Audrey is currently preparing for a solo exhibition at the Knitting and Stitching Shows. She was Head of the Embroidery/Textiles Department at Goldsmith College from 1975 until retirement in 1988. She now lives in Pembrokeshire, West Wales.

ROZANNE HAWKSLEY, née Pibworth, was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire and studied at the Southern College of Art, Portsmouth and the Royal College of Art School of Fashion. Roz started out working for a textile firm in the US although she is best known as a freelance designer, maker and tutor. Roz is a member of the 62 Group and in 2003 received a bursary from the Embroiderers' Guild to develop work for SAMPLE, which will be shown at various venues in 2004. Roz is currently working toward showing at the Knitting and Stitching Shows in 2005 and for a solo show in 2006 curated by the Ruthin Gallery. She too lives in Pembrokeshire.

AUDREY WALKER:

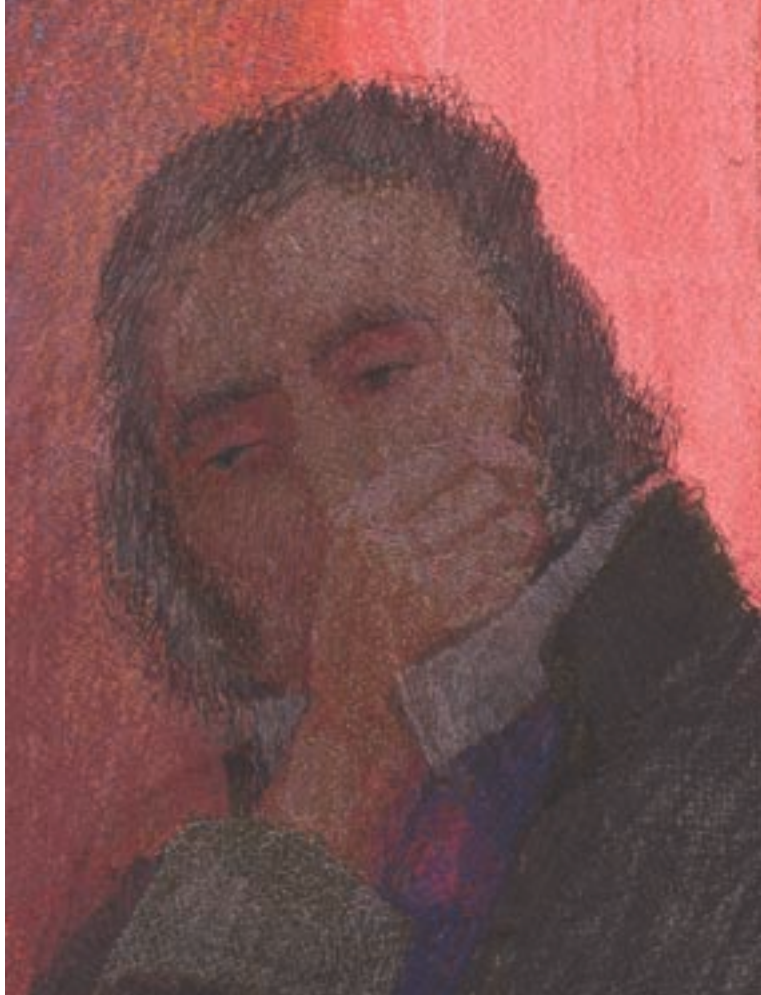
‘I think it was 1976 when I first met Rozanne. I had recently been appointed Head of the Embroidery/Textiles Department at Goldsmiths College and she was attending a short summer course in printed textiles run by David Green. As soon as the opportunity came along, I offered Roz a job as a part-time lecturer. I knew that she had special strengths to bring to the department – two in particular. Firstly, the way she would encourage students to discover their own direction and to consider seriously the reasoning behind their work. Secondly, she had exceptional skills in the three-dimensional manipulation of cloth, which came from her fashion training.

At that time, Roz and I didn't meet on a social level and surprisingly didn't talk about each other's work, even though we were often showing in the same exhibitions. I remember that I was fascinated by the intricacy of her work and the complex symbolism it contained. I recall particularly a series of jewelled gloves in boxes, which had strong religious references that I didn't fully understand. However, I was able to appreciate their beauty on a simpler level.

There are so many startling differences in our work although we both get so much from the conversations we now share. Since we both retired and now live only two miles apart in Pembrokeshire, we have long and frequent discussions but only when it's the right moment will it be about the work. When we share long car journeys on the way to exhibitions, I'm often amused that while I'm taking in astonishing colour relationships, Roz will be noticing every dead animal at the side of the road!

Another difference between us is how we deal with allowing other people to see our work. My training in painting meant that my work was up on an easel, or the wall, from day one and at the mercy of every passer-by. When I make embroideries they too are up on the wall and I must have become hardened to this. Nevertheless, I don't like questions too early because I don't like putting into words what I'm attempting: I only have a glimmer of an idea to start with and it is through the actual making that these tentative thoughts turn into reality. I do lots of scribbles and writing in notebooks but I never do a fully resolved drawing that can be translated into embroidery. This would close off my options; it would restrict the excitement of discovery and that would be exceedingly boring for me. It's a bit like hearing writers describe how surprised they are by what happens to the characters they have invented as the writing proceeds.

We also use colour differently. Roz uses it essentially for symbolic purposes. I simply assume that colour and light are fundamental to understanding the physical, three-dimensional world and to dealing with the complex business of trying to make a convincing image on a flat surface. When I turned from painting to embroidery, it was to do with the special



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Above: Audrey Walker
Beach Man. 1997.
Collection of Pat Starr

Above, right: Audrey
Walker *Beach Woman*.
1997. Collection of
Michael Brennand-Wood



qualities achievable by building layers of separate coloured threads. I relish placing one colour next to another and making them live. Colour is also essential for me to get a particular mood. For instance, I enjoyed dealing with an all-pervasive pink in a recent piece for the 62 Group exhibition at the Harley Gallery. I attempted an imaginary portrait of the reclusive Fifth Duke of Portland, a visionary who lived in one room, which was painted pink throughout.

As for scale, it is very much an intuitive thing. For instance, when I made *Beach Man* and *Beach Woman*, I wanted to evoke something heroic and yet slightly enigmatic – so larger than lifesize came about. With landscapes, I usually need to give a sense of moving through space so they are usually fairly large. For my triptych, *No Evil*, I was trying to get a direct contact between the viewer and the three figures, so they were life-size. However, it's often sheer pleasure to follow a large piece that's taken months to complete by a very small work.²

ROZANNE HAWKSLEY:

'I had sabbatical leave and David Green urged me to apply for a place on the postgraduate Diploma Course at Goldsmiths. I met Audrey when I was accepted. It is not an exaggeration to say that becoming part of the department almost saved my life – it gave me a new direction; one that I had been looking for for years. It was great to be part of this stimulating environment with its unique ethos – the focus was absolutely on the development of each student as an individual. It follows that the staff were wildly different to each other but somehow it worked and I feel privileged to have been part of it.

My strongest recollection of Audrey's work at the time is of colour – the extraordinary way she handled it and used it to convey a sense of light and space in the landscape subjects she was dealing with. I tend to work either monochromatically or with a restricted range of colour. Of course, Audrey and I are very different in character but the realisation of our parallel,



AUDREY WALKER

shared past points up similarities too. We both went to art school on county scholarships and ended up at the Slade and the Royal College. There was a lot of rivalry but also much revelry between the two schools. The jazz scene was terrific and we must have passed by each other frequently at Ronnie Scott's or the Colony Room, Soho. And Audrey and I listened to some of the same people – David Sylvester, Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud, John Minton ...

Although our lives after art school couldn't have been more different, we both made a radical shift way from our specialised training and early careers and into textiles. Our different experiences perhaps go some way to explain our dissimilar subject matter and our ways of working. I am, in contrast to Audrey, much more private in the way I work. My early fashion training could not have been more 'out in the open' but even then, I knew I was working against myself. But we do share some similarities of working. I never draw out what I am going to make – there is

this glimmer of a thought, which evolves from an emotional response to something. It's often an almost unconscious emergence of a feeling to put into some material form so if I drew it, I would have resolved it. I do have a number of drawings, which remain private until I choose to show them, which can be months or years later. I am thinking of those I did when my son, Mathew, and my husband, Brian, died. With most of my work I have to be a very long way into it before I share it.

The Duke's reclusive nature attracted me to take part in the 62 Group exhibition. I was interested in his self-concealment, together with his strong social awareness. I based the piece on these factors – creating places within two small, suspended drawers to serve as the pink room where he devised plans for the estate and to indicate his private life and love.

**Below: Rozanne
Hawksley *Et Ne Nos
Inducas... And Lead
Us Not***



BRIAN HAWKSLEY



Above: Rozanne Hawksley. *Look Upon His Works and Marvel*. 2003. Mixed media

Right: Audrey Walker. *Summer Piece*. 1977. Collection of Susan Chivers

This very small piece was made immediately after I had spent months researching and working on the bursary installation for SAMPLE, the context exhibition for art of the STITCH – which needed a whole wall at Birkenhead and Tilburg. The matter of scale is difficult to define – it is an innate response to the subject. Often there is a kind of rationale in that the size is dictated by the activity of the body for instance in my piece, *Et Ne Nos Inducas... And Lead Us Not*. In an installation, the size of the venue is obviously a key factor but I also try to incorporate the intimate, for instance in the nations and states depicted on the bones in *Treaty*.

I know that the subjects Audrey and I tackle are very different but the way people see and interpret things is not always the same and our recent visit to Amsterdam really highlighted this. We were looking at two stages of the same print, hung side by side in an exhibition of German Expressionist prints. In the first version, there was a man in the foreground with a woman behind him: in the second version, just the man. I said, 'He's all alone; she has died, and Audrey said: 'No, he was doing a portrait of the man and the other figure wasn't necessary in the composition!' At the very end of the visit, in the last few hours in Amsterdam, we went our separate ways: Audrey headed to the floating flower market to buy bulbs and I headed to the rather tacky but essential Museum of Torture – but only because I was going to look at the Spanish Inquisition bits – the Catholic bits!'



AUDREY WALKER