

The Contemporary Textile Studio Co-operative

The Contemporary Textile Studio Co-operative was formed in 2006 by a group of textile artists and craftspersons in Toronto to provide access to affordable and properly equipped studio space. Through our studio, members and associates work, teach, learn, interact and innovate with other designers, artists and the community. Our studio home is a beautiful 1100-square-foot space at 401 Richmond St. W., situated in Toronto's cultural hub and surrounded by other artist-run centres. Traditional Ajrak Printer, Pakistan. Part of Munira Amin's research project to collect and record traditional Ajrak techniques.

While we are a relatively new organization, we envision our Studio becoming a centre for innovation in textiles art, craft and design in Canada. We also hope to partner with similar textile studios in other parts of the country and around the world.

A fundamental aspect of our vision is a commitment to the development and ongoing exploration of clean, safe, sustainable and fair trade textile practices. Co-operative members envision collaborations with environmental, fair trade, and social enterprises to create new textiles, source supplies and showcase innovative approaches to textile design and production.

Kerry Croghan, "Great Outdoors" Throw cushions: 20"x20", hemp, cotton, screenprinted by hand using water-based pigments

All studio members are involved in some aspect of directing and managing the co-operative. Members have access to the studio on a full-time basis. Other emerging and professional artists and craftspeople participate in our extended studio community through ongoing workshops and classes, textile talks, special events, and our "virtual studio" – a website that showcases the work of our members and reports on their research, promotes our classes and workshops, houses critical writing on textiles and connects with the community at large.

Kate Busby "Owen and Roberta"; Queen Sized Quilt, Hand dyed and hand printed silk, linen, velveteen, wool, cotton, cotton batting, embroidery floss. 88" x 99"; 2007

Members contribute towards the costs of the space and general studio supplies, and lend their skills and enthusiasm to the direction and development of our unique non-profit artist-run co-op.

Full members have 24-7 access to our well-equipped studio, as well as opportunities for revenue generation and collaborations with other members and our institutional partners. Our ongoing relationship with the Textile Museum of Canada, for example, enables us to provide hands-on workshops in conjunction with museum exhibitions. The next workshop in this series, taught by Sharon Epstein, will take place April 10-11. Students will have the opportunity to develop ideas based on the current show at the museum, "Fashionably Wrapped: The Influence of Kashmir Shawls," and then work with hand-painting and monoprint techniques to create a shawl in our studio. Jeff Garcia's silk-screen print for illustrators; class in the studio

In addition to classes offered in conjunction with our institutional partners, co-op members offer a variety of classes based on their own areas of expertise. These include Jeff Garcia's community workshops for Filipino youth and his popular screen-printing classes for illustrators, as well as Sharon Epstein's "Beyond the Conventional Sketchbook," and introductory courses in screen-printing, felt-making and dyeing. Open studio sessions are available to those with some experience in textile printing. Teen-agers take part in Jeff Garcia's "Zine" screen-printing workshop

This summer, we are delighted to offer what will be the first in a series of workshops led by visiting international artists. World-renowned Australian natural dyer India Flint will be leading a workshop on creating textiles with bioregional dye sources using plants from our locale. The workshop, entitled "Mapping Country," will involve a windfall walk to collect dye materials, drawing, writing and salvage sewing. Participants will make maps, build a colour journal, and work with plant dyes to create beautiful dye samplers.

India Flint, "Leaf Prints"

Studio members are active in the textile field, exhibiting, designing, producing, researching, curating and teaching. This past January, studio member Kerry Croghan participated in the Radiant Dark "Assets & Values" show at Commerce Court during Toronto International Design Festival, where she proposed a contemporary take on Canadian

iconography in a printed textile picnic collection. Also as part of TIDF, Noelle Hamlynn's installation for "Come Up to My Room" at the Gladstone Hotel featured a room lined with embroidered gampi paper, giving the viewer the sensation of being inside a breathing and breath-filled space. Kate Busby, is Co-ordinator for the Ontario Craft Council's Greenbelt Quilt Project where she is using her skill as a quilt-maker to curate and develop this community project. Munira Amin has recently returned from a research trip to Pakistan, where she has been investigating and recording traditional Ajrak block printing processes. Her research focuses on documenting both the materials and the processes related to this ancient skill, which is fast disappearing from use. She plans to work with producers to preserve these skills and develop new applications for traditional textiles. Noelle Hamlyn Snell: hand embroidered gampi tissue paper (detail from wall installation "A room remembers" at Gladstone Hotel)

Our studio community will grow to accommodate new members, associates and equipment and technologies as opportunities arise, while we nurture an evolving "virtual studio" community through a vibrant and lively web presence and continue to extend our reach to the textile community around the world. for more information about the Contemporary Textile Studio Co-operative visit their website : <http://www.textilestudio.ca/> links to artist: <http://www.kerrycroghan.com/> (coming soon)

<http://www.noellehamlyn.com/> visiting Artist India Flint's website <http://www.indiaflint.com/> "Colonial Tea Jacket" by Noelle Hamlyn, this piece is one of several using the classic Canadian "Hudson Bay Blanket" motif sites of events or locations mentioned in story 401 Richmond "a city with in a city"

Toronto International Design Festival Radiant Dark producers MADE 867 Dundas Street West, Toronto
Come Up to My Room at Gladstone Hotel 1214 Queen Street West, Toronto Kerry Croghan, more "Great Outdoors"
Throw cushions: 20"x20", hemp, cotton, screenprinted by hand using water-based pigments

editors note: to see more images from the Toronto International Design Festival 2010 visit my facebook album.