

Julie Paterson's

# Community Garden Art Project

Along with being in nature, there's nothing like a spot of creative collaboration to boost our mental health, and this community art project that I launched mid 2023 is designed around both.

Community Garden is a collaboration between me and hopefully you, and many others. You start with a drawing and end up with a unique piece of fabric printed with an array of different plants. This is yours to embroider and embellish and turn into something beautiful, how ever you want.

## And this is how it works -

I invite you to choose a plant to draw. Something you've grown in your garden or foraged in the neighbourhood. A quick sketch is all I'm after, nothing too tricky.

You might choose to focus on a simple leaf, a twig, a seedpod, or part of a flower. Simple is best. Doesn't need to be big and showy ( but it can be if you want ). If you're local to me you could drop the drawing off in person. If not, you can email me a photo. ( I will go into the drawing and the photo requirements in more depth later on.)

Next, I'll cut stencils from all the drawings and spend a few days printing these stencils onto a length of repurposed fabric.

Then, when I've finished, we'll meet again - either in person or as a live link up, and I will cut the printed fabric length up into pieces. There will be two different sizes to choose from and by now all the people in the project will have chosen which size they want to commit to.

**Small - 40 x 40cm - \$125    Large - 40cm x 80cm - \$250**

Each fabric length produced is a one off. It is a unique artwork that has been created by all of us in the group. It is the community garden we've built together and the piece you get is your allotment to embellish. Whether your piece has your actual drawing printed on it or not is a matter of chance or serendipity. I allocate the fabric pieces at random, which befits the community spirit of our collaborative project.

So then it's over to you, dear collaborator - to embroider over, around and between the shapes that are printed on your piece, working into the fabric to create your own textile artwork in response to my work. You don't need to be good at sewing or know any fancy stitches, just a plain old running stitch will work just fine. You can slow stitch, embroider, applique, cut out and add on. There are no rules. You could forage threads, use second-hand wool that you've unpicked from an old jumper, you could make twine from grasses and stitch with that. There is no end to the possibilities. And once you've finished the embroidery/embellishing part, you might like to make a functional thing from this piece of fabric. You could use it to fancy up a faded old cushion perhaps. Or make a delicious pocket on a bag, incorporate it into a patchwork quilt, make a gorgeous cover for your laptop, maybe repair an old footstool with it. A lampshade would look snazzy. Or just keep it as an artwork for the wall.

Ultimately, the plan is to bring all the finished pieces back together to be part of a group exhibition, either in my studio or online (I havent quite finalised that bit yet...), but the time frame to complete the piece is **two months after the start date.**

If you would like to work with me on this creative community mental health project, email me to add your name to the list for upcoming projects.

x Julie

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