

Fashion as



Victoria Borondo

All things vintage inspire Victoria Borondo, who will be taking part in Artweeks for the fifth time this year. Her collection of handmade bags, purses and corsages will be displayed at her parents' home in Chadlington near Chipping Norton.

"It is the perfect venue because there is an old summer house and I put up bunting in the garden and serve tea and cakes on vintage china," she said.

"I love things that have a history and my mum and I both collect china and lovely teaspoons.

"I have an old Singer sewing machine and a beautiful bodice which I use as props to frame my work, so it is an opportunity to bring it all out.

"People's lives are so busy, we want an atmosphere where they can take time out to slow down, relax and look at my work."

Victoria's aim is to create pieces that will become family heirlooms and keepsakes.

"I make things that have an old-fashioned glamour rather than just pretty-pretty. They are not everyday bags or purses, they have a precious element.

"I hope women hang them on their wall and use them to keep their favourite jewellery or a love letter in, then, take them down to wear them on a special night out."

Her designs are influenced by old botanical books, vintage dresses, china patterns and other artists.

"I always start with the fabric first and because I mainly use vintage, I go to a lot of fairs and flea markets.

"Also, people give me buttons and lace passed down from their grandmother or great aunt.

"I use lots of lace and soft, faded colours, pastel tones especially pinks, pale greens and Champagne."

■ Victoria Borondo will be exhibiting May 14-22 at the Old School House in Chadlington.



wearable art

Textiles is a rich and colourful branch of the arts and this year's Artweeks has plenty to offer in this medium, writes Gill Oliver



The wood nymphs, princesses and wicked witches that fascinated Vikki Lafford as a child are the inspiration behind her couture gowns and accessories. The Witney-based designer is showing her work at three different venues during Artweeks and says she is using it as a chance to try something new.

"I will be showing some experimental works as well as my usual textile accessories but I will exhibit some of my dresses too," she said.

Her Liliia label is a favourite with brides-to-be who often commission her to design their gown or to embellish a vintage or off-the-peg dress.

Vikki, who also creates corsages, motifs, purses, scarves and hair accessories, started her business two-and-a-half years ago and has seen it thrive.

She explained: "The wedding season is the busiest time of year for me and at the moment there is a trend for vintage-inspired styles and antique colours.

"I have had customers who have a 1930s or 1940s dress but want it customised with embroidery to make it individual."

Her work combines traditional hand-stitching, embroidery and painting with state-of-the-art techniques such as computer aided design.

"I love having a go at new things and Artweeks is a good opportunity to do stuff that is a bit more experimental," she added.

Vikki gives talks on embroidery and will be running corsage taster workshops as part of Artweeks.

■ Vikki Lafford's work is on display at The Barn in Cuddesdon from May 7-15, West Oxfordshire Arts Gallery and 23, Hayfield Road, Oxford, from May 21-30. Or visit Vikki's website: www.liliia.co.uk



Vikki Lafford



■ More fashionable art over the page





Lizzie Hurst at work in her studio and, below, one of her fascinators



Textiles are in Lizzie Hurst's blood as both her Swiss grandparents were professional tailors. Her grandfather ran his own business making men's suits and had clients in the USA, France and Switzerland.

"I feel my interests and skills have skipped a generation because I would have loved to have trained as a tailoress," Lizzie said.

"I have always loved art and sewing and have been doing both those things from an early age."

Lizzie will exhibit her collection of designer hats, fascinators, corsages, scarves and silk paintings at the Cotswold Lodge Hotel in Summertown during Artweeks.

The show, which she shares with painter Bee Bartlett and potter Kit Adlington, was organised by Albie Freitas, a waiter there.

Lizzie has two degrees – one in textiles and knitwear and the other in fashion – once worked in "a dark, satanic mill" in Yorkshire and had a work placement with top designer Zandra Rhodes.

She made her first hat a decade ago for a friend's wedding and has never looked back, going on to study millinery as a specialist subject.

Inspired by nature and colour, she runs her venture, Luscious Ladybirds by Lizzie, from the North Oxford house where she was born.

Her father studied at Magdalen College and went on to become a university don.

She added: "I am concentrating on 3D textiles which include corsages, fascinators and hats, as they seem to be coming back into fashion."

■ Lizzie Hurst's work is on show at the Cotswold Lodge Hotel, Summertown, Oxford, from May 21-30.



For more information on viewing times and venues for all artists featured here, visit the website: www.artweeks.org