

## LOUISE DONOVAN – TEXTILE ARTIST - ARTISTIC STATEMENT - MY WORK

My work comes out of my life journey. It is not based on an identity with an artistic school or genre.

In my early years, I loved knitting and crocheting; the needlework class was my favourite lesson. But I did not see myself as an artist. I followed patterns. I did crafts. I had a desire to make things. But I was not creative.

Later, I began to experiment with colour. I developed technical skills associated with patchwork such as piecing and quilting but I did so following traditional established patterns. I still did not see myself as an artist.

Yet there were ways in which I began to realise I was painting pictures in fabric – the first glimmerings of my self as a creative artist were breaking through. My work, especially in my wedding quilts, became people-centred, telling stories about people's lives. My own life journey was shaping my craft. I had started my working life as a teacher engaged with the whole child to help him or her learn more successfully. I moved into my own therapy to help understand my own life journey more clearly. I became a psychotherapist to help others understand themselves. I followed an academic path in psychology to develop knowledge of myself and others as human organisms. My fascination was with people – their stories, their search for meaning. And at the root of all these feelings lay a core belief in hope. The world and its people were fundamentally good. We should always be optimistic. Above all, people matter.

My breakthrough in seeing myself as a creative person - as a textile artist – came around the time of my mother's death in 2008. My quilting style underwent a dramatic change. I began to play with colour, following where my heart led. Three art courses at the St Ives School of Painting in Cornwall provided the specific occasion for the release of my artistic self. I broke with traditional patterning and launched into abstract experiment.

The other great influence on my work has been shaped by the political and economic landscape in the U.K. and much of the rest of the world since 2008. Anger fuels my work. My quilts tell a political story; they also help me cope with the fury I feel when I see how masses of people are exploited in the interests of greed. It is not money that matters. It is people. My art is political.