

Artist, designer and maker Lizzie Farey talks traditional skills

How did you end up doing what you do?

After college I trained in stained glass but after two years I visited my sister-in-law in north Wales who is a basketmaker and she taught me how to make traditional willow baskets. I then moved into more sculptural, artistic pieces. The traditional skills I learnt in the early days have been invaluable in forming my practice.

Who or what inspires you?

Many things. I have some amazing friends; I sing in a small acapella group called Damsel Jam and these women who I have practically grown up with are inspiring. Inspiration is like finding a rich seam of coal – it can lead you on and on.

What is your starting point for any new project?

I clean the studio from top to bottom, roll out a piece of clean white paper to cover the floor and start drawing.

What designers/makers do you admire?

I am drawn to the Japanese and Korean makers who excel in making the complex look extremely simple. One of my early inspirations is Hisako Sekijima who wrote the book *Basketry: Projects from Baskets to Grass Slippers*. I also admire Junko Mori's metalwork and the work of Misun Won, a Korean jeweller who is based in Edinburgh.

What makes a home?

Good smells like freshly mown grass, home cooking and clean sheets. I also have an open fire and when that is lit I feel I'm home.

Is there any object you desire?

A pair of grass slippers woven by Hisako.



What is your idea of a great escape?

Carrick Shore in Galloway. When the weather is good there is nowhere better.

Camping under the stars or hotel comforts?

I love the outdoors, but I'll still go for hotel comforts.

Big screen movie or TV drama?

Movie, I saw *Les Mis* three times.

What book would you recommend to a friend?

Precious Bane by Mary Webb, an extraordinarily beautiful tale set in rural Shropshire. It depicts all the flaws of worldly success.

Best music to work to?

Arvo Part always creates that stillness I need to quieten my thoughts, then it might be some Bach or Einaudi. I must be quite intense when I'm working as I love a good requiem too.

What are you working on at the moment?

I am working for my next big show which is Art in Action at Waterperry House in Oxfordshire (www.artinaction.org) 18–21 July. I am also preparing for the Environmental Arts Festival in Dumfries and Galloway at the end of August. I am lucky enough to be working alongside the renowned Japanese bamboo sculptor Ueno Masao. And then it's all go for SOFA (Sculptural Objects Functional Art) in Chicago.

What makes you laugh?

My sister Rachel, who is also my identical twin. We are very close. She knows just how to set me off and we often end up howling with laughter over the most ridiculous things. *

Lizzie Farey has been selected to take part in Craft Scotland's presentation of work at SOFA Chicago in November (craftscotland.org).