

ROWAN

KNITTING & CROCHET
Magazine Number 52

Digital Edition





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DESIGNERS

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Kaffe Fassett • Brandon Mably • Jennie Atkinson
Amanda Crawford • Sarah Hatton • Ruth Green
Josh Bennett • Julia Frank • Jemma Weston
Sarah Dallas • Erika Knight

EDITOR'S LETTER

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the turning page version of Magazine 52. The turning page really does bring the magazine to life. The next best thing to having the magazine actually in your hands. Once you have viewed all these beautiful designs why not go that step further and become a Rowan subscriber to the magazine and have it delivered direct to your door as a special treat to yourself. After all we all need something to look forward to as the summer comes to a close.

This season I hope we have given you all the traditional themes and techniques you have come to expect from Rowan. The wonderfully colourful and playful fairisle, the Scottish plaid stepped in history, the cable that travels with elegant ease up the fabric of the jumper and the modern colour blocking that makes intarsia a joy to work.

The designs in Magazine 52 have been created by the Rowan inhouse team and our stable of freelances. This season we are also introducing new talent and faces to the Rowan family with Ruth Green, Jem Weston and showcasing a stylish yet modern design from Josh Bennett.

So whether its a two colour fairisle, an intarsia colour block sweater or a rhythmical cable design you choose to knit, I hope you enjoy the journey from casting on to casting off.



Kate Buller
Rowan Brand Manager



ON THE COVER

Sole by Ruth Green

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downloadable
patterns



BUTE MENS
Felted Tweed
Colourspun
Lisa Richardson



HARBOUR BAG

British Sheep Breeds Boucle

Sarah Hatton





HEBRIDES
Kidsilk Haze Stripe
Lisa Richardson



STROMA LEGWARMERS

Felted Tweed

Jemma Weston



THAMES
Cocoon
Erika Knight



BARRA

Felted Tweed Aran

Sarah Dallas





BAILEY MENS
Drift
Big Wool
Marie Wallin



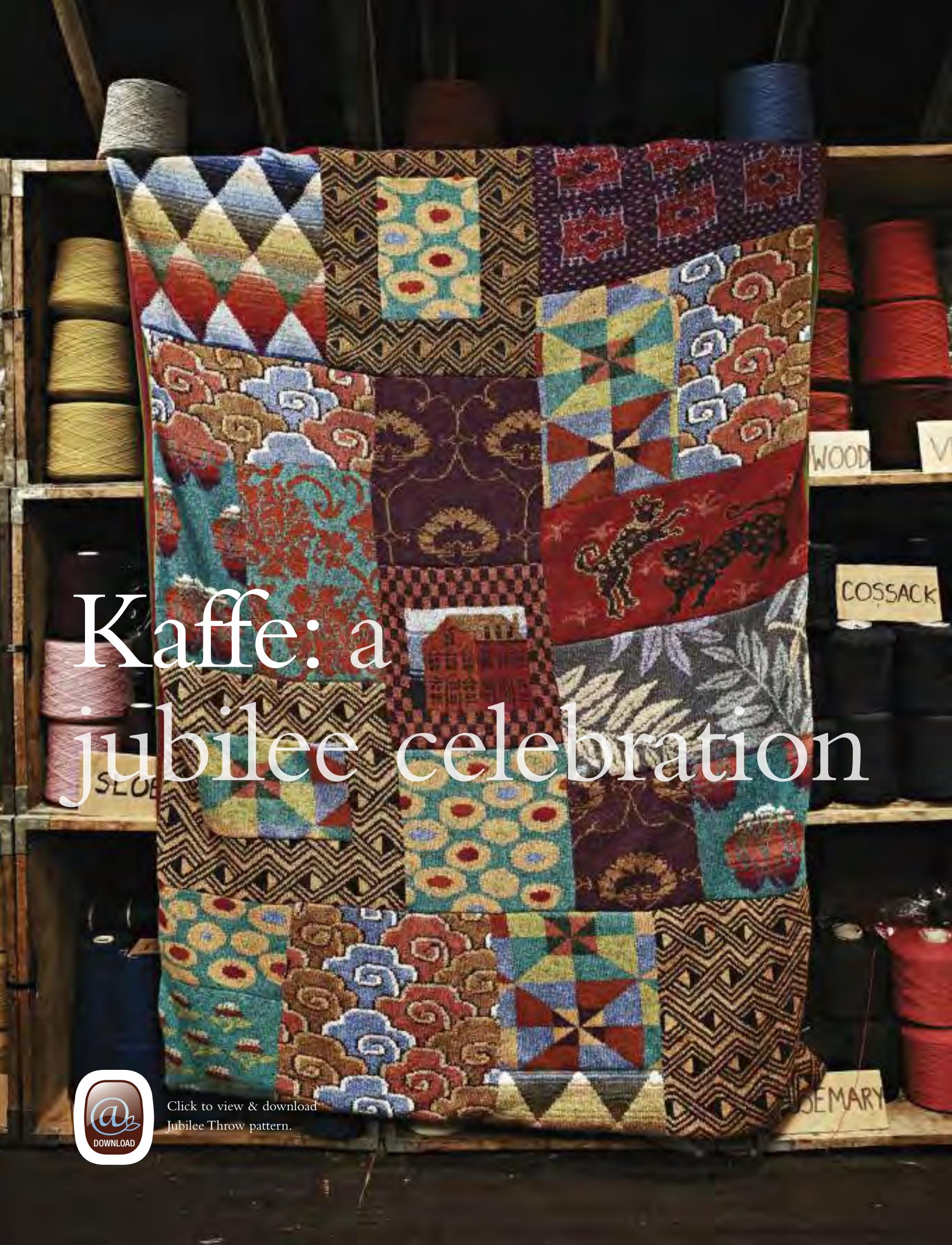


WIGHT
Cocoon
Lisa Richardson



LEWIS
Pure Wool DK
Martin Storey





Kaffe: a jubilee celebration



Click to view & download
Jubilee Throw pattern.



Kaffe Fassett is an inspirational and internationally renowned textile artist. Kaffe has been working with Rowan from the start in the 1980's and has been instrumental in the growth of Rowan into the success that it is today. Even now, Kaffe is still a prolific designer producing wonderful designs for his quilting fabrics, quilts and of course hand knitting.





With 2012 being an important year in respect to Her Majesty's Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic Games, we decided to ask Kaffe to select his favourite hand knitting designs from over the years and then translate these into a wonderful patchwork throw. The 'Jubilee Throw', knitted in one of Kaffe's favourite yarns – Felted Tweed, is a beautiful work of art and will grace the interior of any well dressed home. It surely is destined to become a much treasured heirloom to pass down the family for the future generations to enjoy.

To compliment the throw we also asked Kaffe to design this beautiful women's sweater 'Islay'. This is a quintessential Kaffe design also knitted in the wonderful Felted Tweed. Designed with the 'Hebridean' story in mind, Kaffe has mixed his signature square plaid design with a border inspired from the 'Foolish Virgins' design, creating this very wearable, lovely colour-work design.



Click to view & download
Islay pattern.



hebridean

Inspired by the history of Fairisle knitting, HEBRIDEAN is a beautiful collection of womens and menswear knits which evokes the spirit of the Outer Hebrides and the Far North.





HARRIS

Kid Classic & Colourspun
Marie Wallin







KIRKWALL WRAP

Felted Tweed

Julia Frank

TIREE

Rowan Tweed & Colourspun

Martin Storey



BUTE WOMENS

Colourspun & Felted Tweed

Lisa Richardson



Click to view & download

Bute Mens pattern.





A photograph of a woman with short, light brown hair, wearing a dark blue turtleneck sweater with a yellow and red plaid pattern on the front. She is leaning against a vertical wooden post, looking directly at the camera. The background shows a rustic stone wall and a bright, possibly overexposed, outdoor scene.

MULL
Rowan Fine Tweed
Martin Storey



RONALDSAY
Wool Cotton
Lisa Richardson



KINTYRE

Wool Cotton, Kidsilk Haze & Pure Wool DK

Marie Wallin

Throw and cushion by Anta



UIST

Pure Wool DK

Jennie Atkinson

Throws and cushions by Anta



ORKNEY
Felted Tweed
Marie Wallin





SKYE
Colourspun
Brandon Mably

Men's kilt by Anata





WESTRAY THROW
Rowan Tweed
Martin Storey



ARRAN SOCKS
Colourspun & Felted Tweed
Jemma Weston





EIGG SLIPPERS

Colourspun, Felted Tweed,
Purelife British Sheep Breeds Boucle

Jemma Weston

Check throws by Anta

TOBERMORY

Kid Classic

Marie Wallin







Photographer: Sheila Rock. **Styling:** Marie Wallin.
Hair & Make Up: Frances Prescott (One Make Up). **Art Direction:** Marie Wallin.
Models: Rachel Blais (Premier) & Joe Moreline (Select).
Location: Ballone Castle, Tain, Easter Ross, Scotland.
All the check throws and cushions shown in this collection were kindly loaned by Anta (www.anta.co.uk)

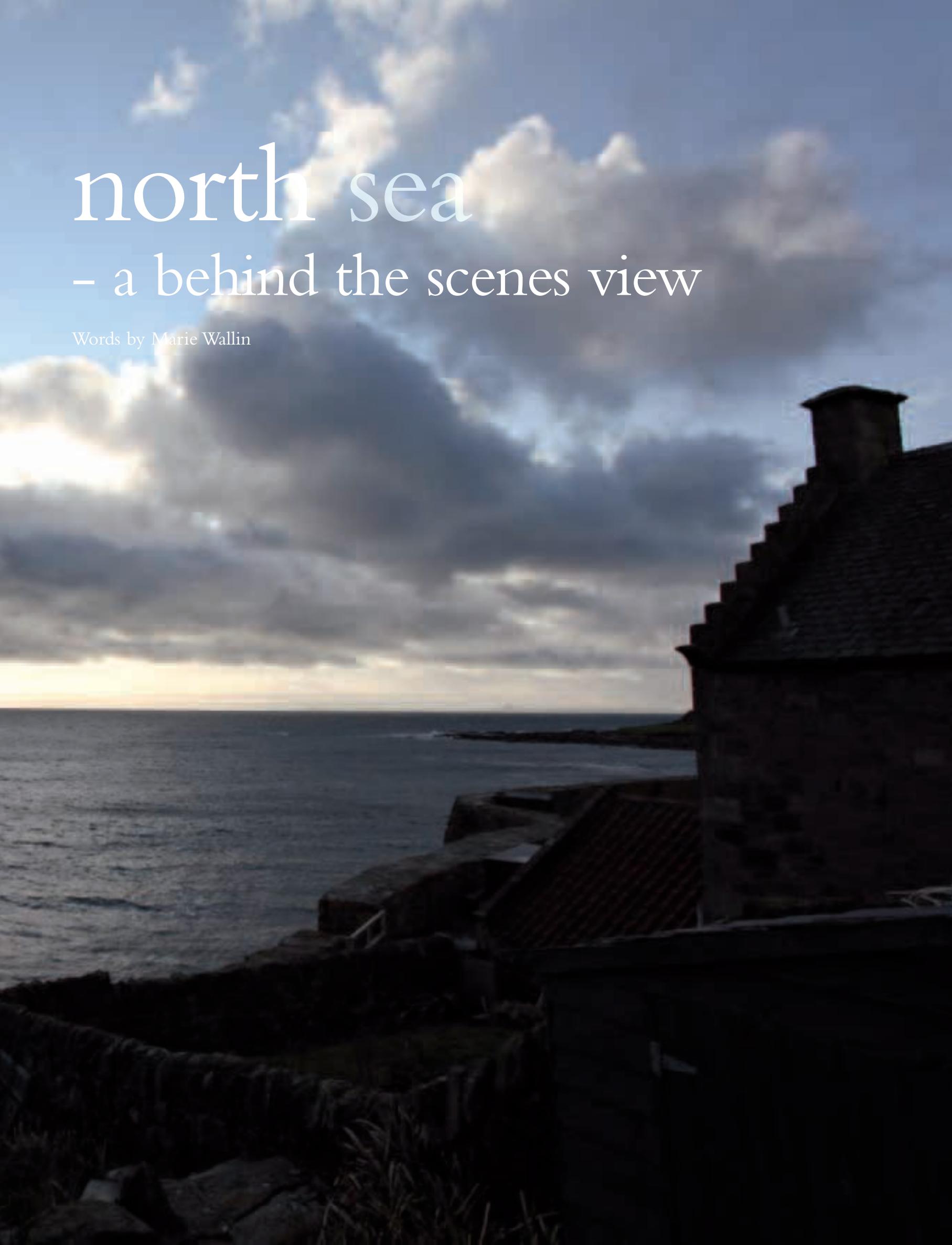


LERWICK
Felted Tweed Aran
Marie Wallin

north sea

- a behind the scenes view

Words by Marie Wallin



The beautiful northeast corner of Fife, Scotland was the perfect location for our NORTH SEA collection. Just lying south of the historic town of St Andrews are the tiny stone harbours of the fishing villages of the East Neuk – Anstruther, Crail, St Monans and Pittenweem. We photographed NORTH SEA in St Monans and Crail in November last year.

I arrived in Anstruther after a mammoth five hour drive down from Tain in the Western Highlands (the location for the HEBRIDEAN collection). Thankfully the weather was kind to us for the drive – a week later the main route from the north was blocked with heavy snow!

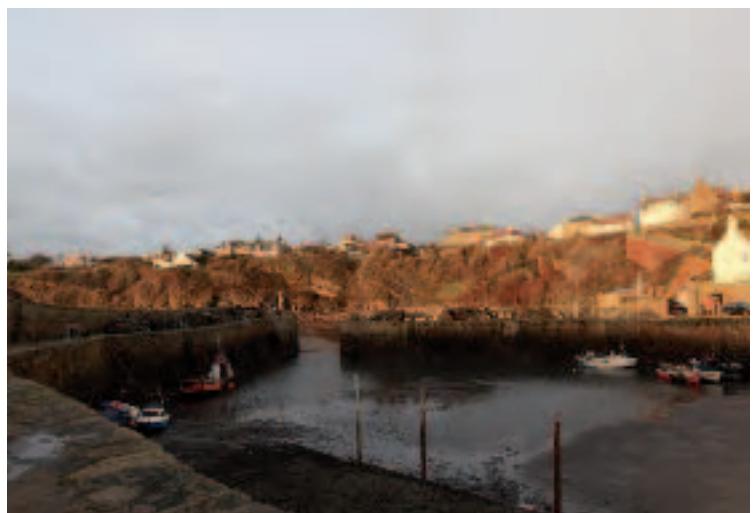
The crew – myself, Peter – the photographer, Carl – Peter's assistant, Frances – our hair & make up lady and the two models, Sif and Andrew stayed at the very traditional but friendly 'Crows Nest Hotel' in Anstruther. The staff were very welcoming, the food very good and the rooms nice and warm, just what you need after a long cold day on shoot!





On the first day of shooting we went to St Monans and it was blowing an absolute gale, but thankfully it was still fairly mild for the time of year. Even so we had to keep Sif's hair tied up to keep it from blowing across her face! Luckily we had lots of blankets and hot water bottles to keep people warm as we had to change outfits in the back of my hire car! We shot by the harbour amongst the fishing boats and in some of streets of St Monans. Later in the day we went to Crail, to explore for the next day but also to shoot a few pictures.

The second day, we were not so lucky with the weather. We had to dodge heavy showers, it was even windier than the day before and it had also turned very cold. Thankfully there was a very warm welcome at the lovely 'Crail Harbour Gallery and Tea Room'. This little haven was invaluable as the owners allowed us to change in the shop and kept us supplied with copious amounts of the most delicious hot chocolate! So many thanks to the Stampers for their kind hospitality. You can see from some of the pictures that we had to battle with the elements. Especially on the second day Carl nearly blew away whilst hold a large reflector!





n o r t h s e a

Inspired by the wild and rugged seascapes of the North East coast of Scotland, NORTH SEA is a wonderful and exhilarating collection of womens and mens British heritage fisherman knits.



FASTNET
Pure Wool Aran
Josh Bennett







SOLE
Lima
Ruth Green

LUNDY MENS
Cocoon
Marie Wallin



LUNDY MENS

Cocoon

Marie Wallin





SHANNON
Kid Classic
Marie Wallin



FITZROY
Creative Focus™ Worsted
Lisa Richardson





SHANTY SCARF

Kid Classic & Alpaca Cotton

Sarah Hatton



UTSIRE

Kid Classic

Sarah Hatton





HUMBER
Creative Focus™ Worsted
Ruth Green





LUNDY WOMENS

Cocoon

Marie Wallin



VIKING

Felted Tweed Aran

Martin Storey



ROCKALL SOCKS

Lima

Sarah Hatton



Click to view & download

Bute Mens pattern.





ROCKALL SOCKS
Lima
Sarah Hatton

MALIN

Felted Tweed Aran

Ruth Green





PLYMOUTH
Pure Wool Aran
Sarah Hatton





FISHER

Creative Focus™ Worsted

Martin Storey







DOVER
Cocoon
Amanda Crawford



Photographer: Peter Christian Christensen. **Styling:** Marie Wallin. **Hair & Make Up:** Frances Prescott (One Make Up). **Art Direction:** Marie Wallin. **Models:** Sif Agustsdottir (Models 1) & Andrew MacGregor (FM Agency). **Location:** Crail & St Monans, Fife, Scotland. Many thanks to Deborah & Alan Stammer of Crail Harbour Gallery and Teatoom for their kind hospitality (www.craillharbourgallery.co.uk).



Shauna Richardson - latest news

Words by Dr Margy Cockburn

The biggest crochet sculpture in the world went on show on Tuesday May 1st when the official launch of the Lionheart Project, part of the Cultural Olympiad, took place at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire.

The three enormous hand-crocheted lions, housed in a custom-built glass exhibition truck, 16 metres long and 4 metres wide, are the result of 36 miles of yarn and two years of hard work by artist Shauna Richardson:

“The Olympic Games offers an opportunity to celebrate the human spirit and showcase how unique we in the UK really are. Lionheart is an interpretation of Richard the Lionheart’s crest, using locally-sourced wool, and was chosen to represent the East Midlands as it celebrates the rich textile heritage of the region.”

The project has been designed to actively engage and inspire audiences and the lions will be going on tour, with stops at Skegness, Louth, Twycross and of course central London.

You can find out more about the artist and her she developed her own particular medium of ‘crochetdermy’ in the printed edition of the Rowan Magazine 52.

If you want to find out more about the project and the exact tour dates go to www.lionheartproject.com



Lionheart Project / London

The world's largest hand-crocheted lions roar into the city!

From 1.00pm on Thursday July 19th the lions will be touring Central London from Trafalgar Square to Tower Bridge and back again, before taking up residency at The Natural History Museum on Friday 20th July until 10th September 2012.

Meet the artist Shauna Richardson and the lions at 10.30am Friday 20th July at The Natural History Museum, London.

lionheartproject.com

an insight into the rowan design award 2011

– held during Wool Week 2011 at Liberty in London.

Words by Dr Margy Cockburn

“Everyone’s a winner”, was the verdict from head designer, Marie Wallin, as she addressed the crowd gathered at Liberty’s of London for the Rowan Design Award prize-giving. All eight student finalists from the Royal College of Art had come up with their own take on traditional British heritage hand knits and, faced with a stunning collection of oversized Fair Isles, asymmetric Arans, and reworked Guernseys, the judges had found it nearly impossible to make a choice. Olwen Walsh got first prize (a raft of goodies from the main sponsors – Rowan, Laxton’s, The British Wool Marketing Board and Libertys) but they all deserved congratulating.

And the success story doesn’t stop there. The Campaign for Wool, launched by HRH The Prince of Wales last year to help revive the wool industry, is definitely getting its message across. Wool may not be a ‘fast fibre’, as Bridgette Kelly of the BWMB was the first to admit, (the students

who received their yarns just a week before the final designs had to be submitted may beg to differ!) but the message about its value is spreading pretty quickly and the number of businesses joining the Campaign continues to grow. There were sheep on the pavements, window displays full of designer knits, an installation at the Design Centre in Chelsea Harbour, fashion archives and photos at Wool Modern in Pall Mall and even sheep-shaped short bread to buy at cafes. And that was just central London.

All round the country people got involved with Love Wool UK and there were gatherings of spinners, felters, dyers, weavers and knitters in every conceivable location – one enterprising group of ladies went mobile and boarded a train to Paris planning to knit a collection of woolly cakes to deposit in selected patisseries throughout the French capital!



Olwen Walsh

- 1st Prize

Olwen's been into wool since she was a child, in every sense. Her grandmother knitted her countless sweaters and, when she grew out of those, she moved into the ones that had been knitted for her mother. She'd hung on to a particular cream Aran cardigan and, when she heard about the Wool Week Award with Rowan, she knew exactly where to start.

"The project is such a great platform to show how innovative and exciting hand knitting can be. I choose to work with wool because it almost always has the aesthetic I want in my own designs and the competition gave me a chance to research the traditional jumpers the fishermen's wives knitted on the Channel and Aran islands."

Actually there's a bit of a debate about just how traditional the Aran sweater is, with some historians suggesting that the version we know today didn't appear until the early 1900's in when the knitters tried to extend their market and make some money from their work. But the different stitch techniques in the



jumpers have certainly been used for centuries and each one carries a different message – the diamond is for wealth and treasure, the basket stitch means fingers crossed for a successful catch and the cable is a wish for safety.

"We face such strong competition in yarn production from Europe and it's vital to establish the importance of maintaining the production of British yarn. Events like Wool Week are a chance to highlight that and, as I continue my career, I hope I can keep reminding people how exciting and desirable the use of wool can be."



“Using stitches that I found on my own fisherman’s cardigan I attempted to create a unique interpretation of the fisherman’s jumper. Intertwining and overlaying stitches, I exaggerated the traditional techniques originally used into a structured, three-dimensional, over-sized form.”

“Wool for me is a sensual material, it gives warmth, it feels good, it is alive and smells nice. It's also timeless, durable and elegant these qualities make it especially relevant to these times.”





Julia Mackenroth – 2nd Prize

Julia jumped at the chance to get involved with Rowan too. She started at the RCA a year ago, after graduating from Hamburg University, and spent the first year grappling with machine knitting. But her real passion is for being immersed in yarn and the Rowan brief put her right back in her element.

“When designing, the most important aspects for me are the

colour and the tactile texture.” The traditional Fair Isle gave her all the inspiration she needed and she started cooking batches of yarn in tea and various fruit juices to perfect the colour combinations, loving the fact that no two batches ever turn out exactly the same. She then manipulated some traditional knit patterns, changing their size and shape and, putting the two together, produced her winning contemporary version of a much-loved classic.

“My inspiration for this project was Sailing Sheep. I split the brief in two and took it quite literally - looking at the qualities of the sheep themselves and the stitch techniques found in the traditional Guernsey fishermen’s jumpers and combining the two. My final design was derived from the sculptural quality of the horns of rams and the knit purl of the traditional Guernsey’s. “



Rachel Hall's design

Rachael Hall

- 3rd Prize

“The competition has reminded me just what can be achieved with a couple of wooden sticks and some yarn and it’s really highlighted what’s available in Britain – the different sheep breeds and the beautiful qualities found in their wool.” It also tempted Rachael to add crochet to the hand knitting skills she’d first acquired while doing her BA at Ravensbourne College. And she’s a designer that really does put the emphasis on the ‘hand’ bit.

“I may start by drawing but I’m very hands-on and I have to leave the paper, pick up the yarn and start to knit to see what it feels like. It’s the only way I can really check if it’s going to be OK.”

She’s also quite clear about her priorities: “It’s important as a

designer to take responsibility for what I do in terms of the environment, to know where my materials come from and to create that awareness.

She’s impressed by ‘Izzy Lane’, a company that employs a network of home-based hand knitters who use wool that is spun and dyed locally, and has set her sights on working for a small studio or swatching: “I don’t suppose it will ever make me rich but that’s the way I would like to work.”

“It’s more important than ever to support Britain and make the most of existing industries and resources. We have a unique heritage and set of skills and it’s up to us to make sure they’re passed on to future generations.

Lucy Hammond

At the tender age of seven, Lucy proudly presented her new-born baby brother with his first hat – also her first hand-knit. The design included plenty of ‘ventilation’ holes but was the first of many, including show pieces for Giles and Jasper Conran while an intern at Knithouse Studio.

“I’ve always knitted and take stuff with me everywhere. I had quite a bit of explaining to do when the bouncers on the door of a nightclub I went to recently started doing a bag search!”

Multi-tasking has its dangers, though, and after a lack of concentration that

was a little longer than momentary, Lucy found she’d knitted the front of a jumper – twice!

A graduate of Kingston University, Lucy now lives in a warehouse with a group of artisans who are all waving the ‘Made in the UK’ flag: “It’s really important we keep our skills going so things can be made here in England. It’s difficult at the moment to find a career path that lets you do that but, hopefully, initiatives like the Campaign for Wool will encourage traditional industries and help bring British sheep farming to the fore again and turn the tide of the import/export trend in our favour.”

“Taking inspiration from traditional fisherman knits I investigated the crashing together of historical cables and Fair Isle techniques - playing with the idea of collision and extending it to asymmetry. The overall silhouette was purposely large and oversized ‘boyfriend’ fit to recognise the fishermen’s wives who were an integral part of the traditional fishing industry and who never knew if their men would return safely.”



Lucy Hammond's design



“My garment was knitted entirely in the round, and the argyle pattern on the body of the sweater was created by reversing the knit/purl columns. Since fisherman’s ribs create a reversible fabric, my garment can be worn inside out too - the inside has exactly the same pattern as the outside, in reversed colours.”

Carlo Volpi's design

Carlo Volpi

“If everyone does their bit we can move mountains.” Carlo’s been doing his bit for knitting since his Nan first taught him in an attempt to keep him quiet. He’s now determined to start on moving mountains and launch himself as a knitwear designer who’s passionate about his craft and the social, economic and environmental importance of supporting the British yarn industry.

Carlo was born in Italy, but happily acknowledges his delight in working with Rowan and British wool and his appreciation of the particular ‘simple, natural’ feel of the home-produced yarn.

He’s quite happy to acknowledge his delight in knitting, period:

“What I really like about knitting is its magic: I absolutely love sitting down in silence for hours watching a

single strand of yarn being slowly turned into a beautiful, three-dimensional structure that has been carefully designed and planned. I love creating complex stitch structures and perfect mathematical arrangements and I’ve always thought knitting is like a soap opera: it’s full of drama, complexities, tears but, most of the time, a happy ending.”

For his competition piece he deliberately went for a challenge – a fisherman’s rib to be knitted entirely in the round. “I don’t really like any of the bits that don’t involve knitting and doing garments in the round avoids the need for sewing up!” Quite.

“Wool is an amazing material to work with. It’s waterproof yet breathable, it’s elastic, can felt and, most importantly, each staple has its own history. Now, how can a man made fibre compare with that?”

Stephanie Szumlakowski

“Being part of the Campaign has really opened my eyes to what is available in natural colours; I had no idea before but during the summer I visited a shop in Skye where the owner had managed to cover the entire colour wheel using stuff like bog plants, dried mushrooms and green beans as natural dyes.”

Stephanie spent her childhood in Ayrshire, surrounded by a family of knitters and the sea; she was inspired by both. At 16 she’d knitted a baby pink scarf but didn’t do much until, returning from Dundee University one holiday, she came upon her Mum knitting ‘whacky hats with ears on them’. Stephanie ran with the idea and started a veritable craze among her peers for ‘titfers’ with

acoustic additions. And she’s been knitting presents for people ever since, although the competition piece is her first complete garment.

Traditional skills have always appealed – she taught herself macrame and tatting while a student at Jordanstone College of Art and Design but, if the need arises, she just makes up a brand new stitch.

“The RCA has really encouraged me to explore the realm of the hand-made and the Campaign for Wool is a great device to promote wool and get it the respect and interest it deserves. It offers so much more than the primal necessity of warmth – it gives comfort and security and it stands for a purity that we rarely see in contemporary fashion.”

"I envisaged the flowing lines and asymmetric nature of seaweed and the water patterns created in sand to construct my garment and convey a natural, irregular aesthetic; as if the garment itself had been washed up on the shore or eroded into the form it is at present."



Stephanie Szumlakowski's design

"My cape design is inspired by traditional knit stitches used in fishermen's sweaters. I developed the iconic cabling technique and re-worked the stitch through drastically increasing the scale and introducing a 3-D element to the fabric by extending the cables into knots."



Sophie Waterfield's design

Sophie Waterfield

Sophie's no stranger to awards – she's already grabbed a couple of scholarships, the Umbro Design Award 2011, and had her design for New Era's iconic baseball cap exhibited across the globe. Bernie Yates, lecturer at Central St Martin's, reintroduced her to knitting and she's happily tackling an MA in Knitted Textiles at the RCA. While she mainly works on fine gauge knit machines, the challenge of the Rowan brief caught her imagination. She admits to not having been particularly aware of the issues around natural fibres before the Award but, now she knows what's at stake, she's giving it her every support.

“What I really like in knitting is the lack of control. I start creating the

fabric and that then dictates the form of the garment so you don't really know exactly where you're going when you start.” Too true – on one occasion, after three days of toil on a fine gauge Dubied machine to produce a complicated fabric for her BA collection, the machine broke, the piece laddered and the whole thing ended up on the floor!

“Britain is one of the main pioneers of knitwear and I want to keep the entire chain of production, from sheep to garment, on home soil.” To achieve that she's set herself the task of closing the price gap between designer and high street products and producing exceptional quality garments at a price that ordinary people can afford.

Benedict Holmboe

She doesn't beat about the bush: “Wool is the best material in the world and the natural choice for my projects.”

Born in Norway, Benedicte has travelled a good deal, learning about herself, various cultures and the different ways people live and think about the world. The Rowan Award appealed as a way to work with her favourite fibre and explore the knitting heritage of her native land and Britain at the same time. She didn't consider each and try to find a happy medium, but took the best from both and just, well, put them together:

“Through all my travels the feeling of belonging to Norway has grown so it felt natural to focus on the

Norwegian heritage as well as British. The right sleeve is an Aran pattern, the left cuff is from a Fair Isle and the body is made up of patterns from different places in Norway. The middle part comes from a valley called Setesdal and the shoulder part is taken from an Islander.”

Benedicte is aware the home production route costs more money but in terms of caring for the climate and ecology has to be the way to go. And her contribution to the future of the industry?

“I will try and decrease the mass consumption mentality of the customer and make clothes that are designed to last for more than one season.”



"By using lots of different patterns from both Norwegian and British traditions I have created a unique look for a modern, confident man, who appreciates the qualities of natural materials."

Benedict Holmboe's design





Essentials

is a collection of the key shapes and textures on trend, designed into more simple, easy to wear styles that will compliment the season's ESSENTIAL looks. Using a bright autumnal colour palette, ranging from teal blues to soft pinks this is the 'must have' collection of the season.



THE
CHUNKY
FISHERMAN
RIB TUNIC

RUBY
Kid Classic
Marie Wallin



THE
BOBBLE
TEXTURE
POLO



EBBE
Lima
Marie Wallin



WADE
Cocoon
Lisa Richardson

THE
LOOP
CROPPED
CARDIGAN



FALA
Cocoon
Martin Storey



THE
NEW
TRADITIONAL
TUNIC



THE FITTED
BOBBLE
CARDIGAN

BEATRIX

Wool Cotton

Sarah Hatton

DALLAN
Lima
Jennie Atkinson



THE
NEAT
CARDIGAN



THE
WEAVE
TEXTURE
SWEATER



ADDISON
Alpaca Cotton
Amanda Crawford



PAIGE
Kidsilk Haze
Lisa Richardson

THE
MOHAIR
SWEATER



MACY
Purelife British Sheep Breeds Boucle
Lisa Richardson

THE
BOUCLE
SHRUG

THE
TEXTURED
TANK



IGY
Cocoon
Lisa Richardson







THE
COLOUR
BLOCK
TOP

NEEFA
Lima
Marie Wallin



introducing Ruth Green – an interview

Words by Dr Margy Cockburn

Ruth Green is a Royal College of Art Fashion Womenswear Knitwear graduate who has just launched her own knitwear label and whose designs will be featuring for the first time in the 52nd issue of the Rowan Magazine, due out this month.

She shares some of her thoughts on designing.

When did you first discover your skills?

Throughout school I spent all my free time in the art room and I began knitting during my A-levels. I always knew I wanted to be in the creative world, and having the right tutors throughout my studies has guided me to where I am today!

What would you pick out as important influences on your work?

There are so many!

There are some artists I return to over and over again, such as Kyffin Williams and John Knapp Fisher, and I love the landscapes that inspired them; I return to Pembrokeshire every year. This year I created the designs for the 'North Sea' story for Rowan Mag 52 whilst sitting on a window seat overlooking Newgale beach and cliffs listening to the howl of gale force winds. The best inspiration ever!

And when I'm out and about I examine what everyone is wearing, the small details and checking what I like and, equally as important, what I don't.

And the Big One - my Mum, who loves knitting and has always inspired me. There have been knitting books around the house for as long as I can remember!





How you approach design?

The best part of knitwear design is that you have so much freedom.

I work looking at a wide range of inspirations, from artists, photos I've taken, sampling, experimenting with silhouette and shapes, sketching and developing the collection as a whole.

In terms of yarn and colour selection, being at the RCA has allowed me to make connections with a number of spinners. I visited the Prato region of Tuscany, while I was taking part in an International Design Competition with other colleges, and we met a number of different spinners and really got to grips with the whole process. I then worked with Filpucci to create designs to exhibit at Pitti Imagine Filati before being lucky enough to gain sponsorship from them for my graduate collection.

I've done a number of projects in conjunction with Rowan, showcasing some designs during British Wool Week in Liberty's. I went on to use my sponsorship from them to create hand knit pieces as part of my final collection at the RCA; they were really successful.

What are the main changes you've seen in the industry and how do you see its future?

Since graduating I've learnt the reality of the Industry in good and bad ways!

What's your favourite colour?

I couldn't possibly choose!

And your favourite place?

I've got a few : sitting in the olive groves of Lourmarin Castle in the South of France listening to crickets; sitting on the edge of St David's head in Pembrokeshire watching wild horses; or wandering around Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue nearer to home!

Can you pick out any particular high spots and low spots in your career so far?

High spots - Finishing a fully-fashioned neckline is always a good feeling!
Being backstage at the RCA fashion show, sharing the moment with everyone and forgetting the exhaustion!



Arriving in Trieste and experiencing ITS10 for a few days of madness!

Low Spots - The yarn bill for this season!

What it was like showing in Paris

Paris was great, I was selected by a panel set up by Artsthread and Who's Next, so was showing alongside eight other graduates. It was a whole new experience being on 'the other side' of one of the huge trade fairs, and meeting a whole range of clientele from buyers, to factories from Hong Kong. It was really interesting to see who liked the collection. It was also great to meet other graduates who are in a similar position to me!

What have you been working on most recently?

I finally got the Autumn/Winter collection all finished, photographed and, with the help of my graphic design hero, Keith Hancox, (www.keithhancox.com) got my look books, swing tags and all my promo material ready and looking slick for London Fashion Week.

Showing with Vauxhall Fashion Scout during The Week was an amazing experience. It exposed my new collection to a really wide range of buyers and press and I was able to make some great contacts, from potential buyers to potential manufacturers. Alongside that I've been doing more freelance for Rowan and doing freelance machine knit sample production in my studio.

My samples have just come through for the Skunkfunk collection which is due for release in September (www.skunkfunk.com) and they look fantastic. Skunkfunk and I are really happy with it and can't wait for the release.

Yesterday I was at a Rowan photo shoot with Marie Wallin in East London, to see some of the designs I've done recently for Studio 28 being shot; the team did a great job and it looked SO good!

And what's next?

I'm just going to keep working hard and see where it takes me!

How do you see yourself in ten year's time?

I'll have gained a lot more experience and still be creating! Hopefully with a little house in the country, some dogs and a clapped out old land Rover!

And your ultimate dream?

To keep doing something I love.

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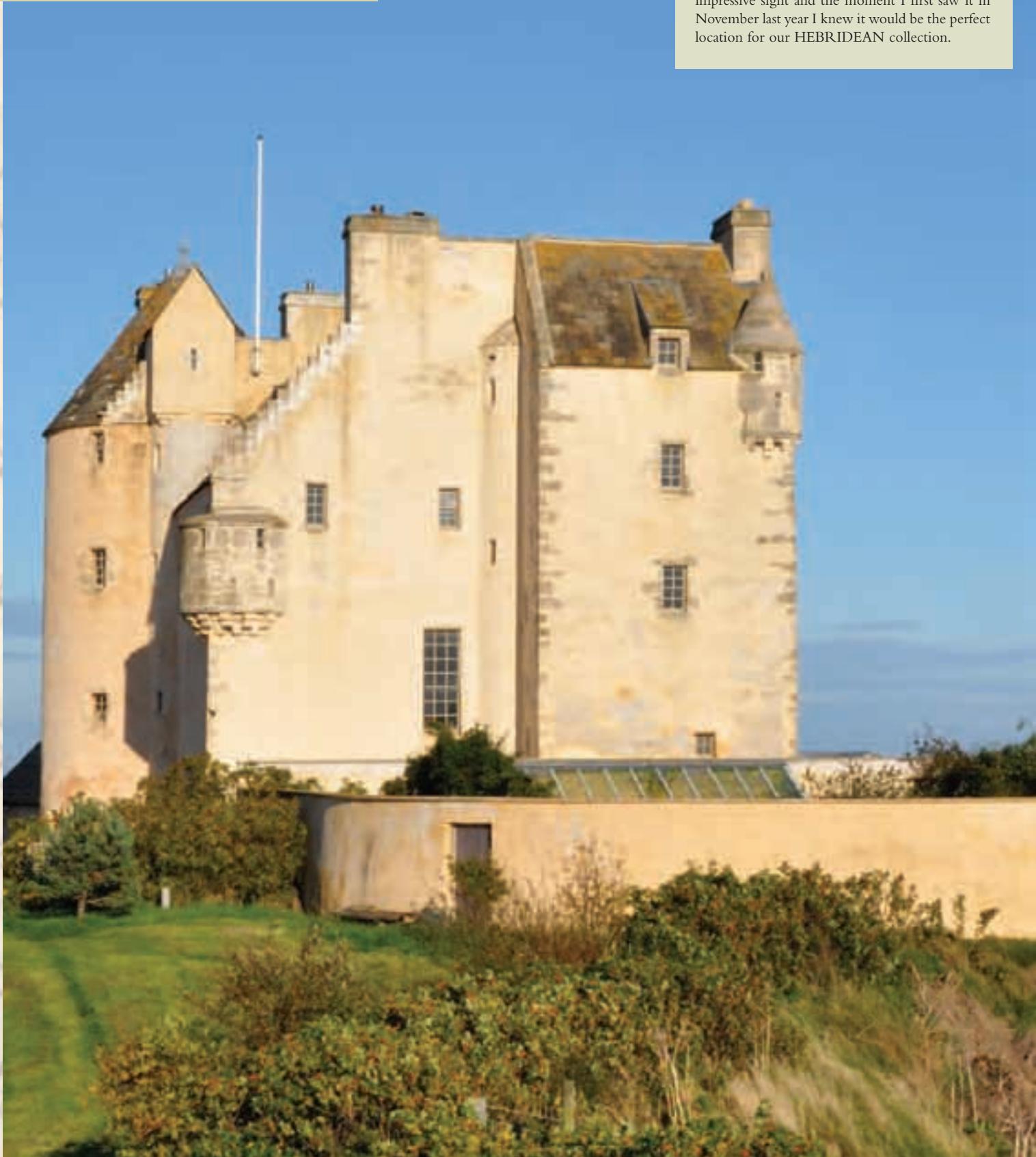
travel journal

words by Marie Wallin

BALLONE CASTLE

Hebridean location

Ballone Castle sits on the wonderful, windswept and dramatic coastal cliffs overlooking the Moray Firth near to the town of Tain in Easter Ross, Scotland. Approaching the castle was an impressive sight and the moment I first saw it in November last year I knew it would be the perfect location for our HEBRIDEAN collection.





The castle is a three story, late 16th century tower house and is said to have been built by a line of the Earls of Ross. In 1623 it was bought by the Earls of Cromarty but it was left unoccupied for a couple of generations and it fell into ruin for several centuries. In the 1990's Lachie Stewart (a conservation architect) and his wife Annie (a talented textile and pottery designer) rescued Ballone Castle from its ruinous state and restored it to its now glorious state.

Annie and Lachie are well known for their internationally renowned textile, furniture and pottery business called ANTA. Formed over 25 years ago, everything from Anta is proudly made



The Rowan crew stayed at:
The Mansfield Castle Hotel, Scotsburn Road, Tain,
IV19 1PR, Scotland.

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www.mansfieldcastle.co.uk

in Scotland. The woollen yarn used in the carpets and tweed fabrics is sourced from the Western Isles and is woven in the Scottish Borders. The lovely oak furniture, designed by Lachie is made in The Highlands with some of the wood being home grown.

Anta is particularly known for taking traditional tartans and tweeds and reworking them with a modern eye creating the beautiful tonal and colourful designs which are then made into their statement bags, throws, cushions, carpets and also pottery.

All the throws, cushions and the kilt seen throughout the Hebridean story were kindly loaned by Anta and are from their current collection.

Anta has a shop at their workshop in Fearn, Tain, Ross-shire as well as a lovely new shop in Edinburgh. All their designs and products can also be bought online.

For more information on Anta please go to
www.anta.co.uk



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