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# Kitchen Table Talent

THIS MONTH: THE EAST YORKSHIRE  
TEXTILE ARTIST



We celebrate the home-grown entrepreneurs who have turned  
their hobby into a thriving business

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## AN EAST YORKSHIRE BUSINESS

"I've always had a need to live in the countryside and Kilham is so quiet and peaceful. The Yorkshire Wolds are a creative hotspot. I'd often drive past David Hockney in Woldgate preparing for his Royal Academy exhibition.

Nearby we also have Bridlington, where I used to run a gallery. It's a beautiful coastal town with one of the most complete Georgian high streets in Britain. I love exploring the antiques and vintage shops.

I find historical houses really inspiring – we're spoilt for choice in East Yorkshire. My favourite is Burton Agness Hall. It has a wonderful garden with unusual plants you can't find anywhere else. Some are over seven feet tall, so you feel like a child when you're walking through them."



Corinne Young stands and sketches in her garden, the midday sun gently warming her back. It's late summer, but autumn seems a million miles away – the garden is still in full swing, and feels alive with the hum of bees and butterflies. Verbenas, love-in-a-mist, sedums and, Corinne's favourite, passion flowers, fill the borders and provide the last swathe of colour before the weather, and the garden, start to fade.

"I love summer," Corinne says, "but I get quite cross if the sun doesn't perform. So I find these stolen, luxurious days wonderful. I always try to have a holiday at this time of year when everyone else has gone back to work. It's such a special time – for me it's all about enjoying the outdoors, picking fruit, collecting seeds and making jam."

For someone so connected to the changing seasons, it's no surprise that Corinne's natural surroundings and her work as a textile artist are inextricably entwined. Her work focuses on plants and insects and, unusually, she often works in three dimensions, creating exquisite embroidered assemblages of butterflies, flowers and seed heads.

It's an intricate process and one that gives Corinne both artistic fulfilment and an intellectual challenge. "The thing that has always appealed to me about textiles is their versatility," she explains. "There are infinite materials and ways in which you can work; it's possible to 'sculpt' in this format, something that I love to do. Working in three dimension really brings things to life."

To do this means Corinne has to know and understand the structure and complexity of what she's trying to represent. "My work is joyful in that it is about my enjoyment, and fascination for the subject matter," she says. "But it's also about how to best

recreate a flower or butterfly and the problem-solving behind the construction. Before I can build something, I need to fully understand its anatomy."

And the best way to do this? "You need to learn how to look." A seemingly simple skill but something that artists and craftspeople spend a lifetime perfecting. For Corinne, her education started at home, with a mother who loved to garden and knit, and an exacting but creative father who spent his working life in textiles. Her aunt, a seamstress, also showed Corinne the alchemy of fabrics: "I watched her when I was little, copying designs she'd seen and cutting straight into the fabric with no pattern – such confidence. She made the most amazing clothes, hats and bags. By the time I was nine or ten I'd absorbed the process and was making clothes for myself and my dolls."

After leaving home at 16, Corinne spent her twenties and thirties working with fabric and colour in different ways including fashion retail and interior design, as well as bringing up her two daughters, Rachel and Rebecca. But it wasn't until the girls had grown up and Corinne reached the age of 40 that she gave herself permission to become a full-time student and signed up for a BA in Textile Design at Bradford College. It was there that Corinne met tutor and textile artist Diane Bates, a formidable creative force and the woman who inspired her to forge a living from her creativity. "She taught me how to see," Corinne explains. "If we were looking at plants, for example, she made me examine their structure and anatomy with a magnifying glass, something I've become fascinated with since. On a practical level, she also taught me some really complex embroidery and textile techniques, ones that built on the skills I'd learned and practised since childhood."

More than ten years on and Corinne now makes a living from her art, creating three-dimensional artwork, bespoke furnishings and accessories, selling her work online and at exhibitions across the UK. She's also a woman at ease with decorating and embellishing her own home. Her personal touches are everywhere – patchwork walls, fabric taxidermy and richly decorated cushions create a warm, inviting home full of wit and character. Her art is also everywhere – fabric flowers, butterflies

**OPPOSITE AND THIS PAGE**  
Corinne's three-dimensional artwork, bespoke furnishings and accessories are inspired by historical artefacts and plants

and insects in her garden. After studying their form, she particularly enjoys recreating favourites such as cornflowers and passion flowers (above)





## WHAT I'VE LEARNT...



**It takes a while for people to take you seriously.** You need to be prepared for the long-haul – it doesn't happen overnight, so it's important to be realistic with your expectations.

**There are challenges you can't always overcome.** I'm not a brave driver. I've been asked to do shows in London, which I've had to turn down as I don't like to drive there. It can be tricky taking my artwork on the train, but I'd rather that than face the stress of traffic.

**You mustn't give up on long-held ambitions.**

I've been a subscriber to *Country Living* since my children were babies, so when the magazine got in touch about featuring me I was thrilled. It's taken me 30-odd years but I've got there! I also did a commission for the Modern Pantry restaurant in London, and spent the summer collecting different plants and flowers from gardens in Yorkshire. It was a lovely project to be involved in.

**The 9 to 5 isn't for everyone.** Being an artist is more a lifestyle than a job. I enjoy the freedom of choosing my own schedule – it's wonderful to be in charge of what I do and not have it dictated to me. You can pick things up and take them in different directions and just see what works.

and textile potted plants fill every surface. It's a specimen-collector's world fashioned from fabric and thread.

Her work comes in many guises but her signature pieces are framed textiles, three-dimensional plant and butterfly portraits mounted onto collaged backgrounds. For these the process begins in the garden, with a fluid sketch of a flower, seed head or passing insects. In her studio she draws and paints the design onto handmade linen paper. "I machine-embroider on top and cut out the flower from the background. At this stage, I can embellish with hand-stitching using embroidery thread or textured yarns."

The work starts to become sculptural: "I stiffen the back of the piece with a mix of wood glue and water and then, as it's drying, I shape the flower into a lifelike form, sometimes using wire to support it. Once everything is dry, I can fix it to its background using a combination of glue and stitching – each background is different, sometimes embroidered fabric or paper, others are hand painted or have an applied collage of botanical prints."

Corinne's cross-over between textiles and gardens is one that has led down some interesting paths, not least a recent collaboration for GROW London with Francesca Murrell, an award-winning garden designer. Inspired by 18th-century women textile artists, Francesca and Corinne transformed a shepherd's hut into a Stitcher's Retreat, with embroidered furniture, stitched plants and sewn props. The wheeled studio was also surrounded by wild flowers, heritage vegetables and fragrant herbs, creating a space that inspired both gardeners and textile-lovers alike.

Other fruitful collaborations have included an exhibition with installation artist Gideon Johnson at Burton Constable Hall, an Elizabethan house near her home, and 16 vast wall panels for the Lord of the Rings show in Toronto and London. But it's in her East Yorkshire cottage that Corinne's best work takes place – sketching in her glorious garden in the late summer sun, it's her relationship with the natural world that grows the richest of rewards.

Vintage fabrics are used, as well as linen paper, which Corinne makes in large sheets in her studio. She gets much inspiration from Burton Agnes Hall (below)



**i** To buy Corinne's work, visit [corinneyoungtextiles.co.uk](http://corinneyoungtextiles.co.uk).



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- Draw up a business plan and define your USP with the support of small-business experts
- Learn how to use social media to promote your venture for free with CL web editor Emma Louise Pritchard
- Discover how to write the perfect media pitch, draft your own and have the opportunity to present it to the CL team
- Hear inspiring talks from Fiona Davies, small-business advisor for WiRE, and CL editor-in-chief Susy Smith, plus much more.

**WHEN: 2 October 2017 • TIME: 9.30am-4.30pm**

**PRICE: £125, including all sessions, delicious lunch, refreshments, business information folder and a CL goody bag**



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If a fear of failure is getting in the way of your business aspirations, we invite you to spend the afternoon in our exclusive Soho venue and hear from life-coach and author of *Start Your Dream Business* Carole Ann Rice. This will be followed by a panel chat with established entrepreneurs who are happy to share their stories and answer your questions. Afterwards, enjoy getting to know the *Country Living* editorial team and network with other budding business owners over a glass of fizz and canapés.

**WHEN: 12 October 2017 • TIME: 2.30pm-6.30pm**

**PRICE: £45, including two inspirational talks, plus a sparkling wine and canapé reception, and a CL goody bag**

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