



Artful Knit

By Christine Jones

In September this year I attended *Artful Knit*, a 3 day workshop with American fibre artist Adrienne Sloane. The workshop, held in Epping NSW, was organised by ATASDA (Australian Textile Arts

& Surface Design Association Inc). Adrienne, whose works feature in Karen Searle's book *Knitting Art: 150 Innovative Works from 18 Contemporary Artists*, has been a fibre artist for over 20 years. Like many of us, Adrienne was taught to knit as a child.

During the 80s & 90s Adrienne was kept busy producing hats on her knitting machines until a fire destroyed her studio in 1999. Her work then developed into the sculptural pieces, often influenced by the current political situation, that we are familiar with today. Her more recognised works include *Truth to Power*, *Cost of War* and *No Strings Attached*.

Adrienne has exhibited many of her works (they are held in collections & museums) and has won awards & recognition for her artwork. *The Culture of Knitting* by Joanne Turney, a recently published academic text,

also contains images of Adrienne's work in a chapter on political knitting.

Adrienne's travels to Bolivia and Peru, where she knit with the local people, have had a significant influence on her. We watched in amazement a video of a villager knitting at great speed with his thumbs and marvelled at their skill when we closely examined traditional hats knit with tiny stitches in a myriad of colours.

So, with Adrienne's vast experience and obvious talent, this was one workshop I was not going to miss, even if it meant 1 plane, 2 trains and a taxi just to get there. After the usual round of introductions we began what was to be 3 days filled with fun & laughter, making new friendships and challenging our concepts of knitting and what knitting could do.

Workshop participants ranged from experienced knitters to others who had not knit since childhood. Under Adrienne's guidance we were soon sharing our knowledge and resources, with our work tables overflowing with some not-so-traditional knitting supplies.

We knit with yarn, wire, fishing line, cassette tape, fabric strips, rope and any other linear element we could lay our hands on, including string licorice! We made protrusions and openings. We knit onto knitting and painted with our knitting. We knitted backwards





Adrienne demonstrating

and short rowed. We explored making shapes and looked at the directionality of knitting.

Adrienne generously shared her methods and knowledge with the group; and it wasn't long before each of us was dreaming of how to incorporate our new found skills into future projects.

To see more of Adrienne's works visit her website at www.adriennesloane.com and to learn about ATASDA visit their website at www.atasda.org.au.

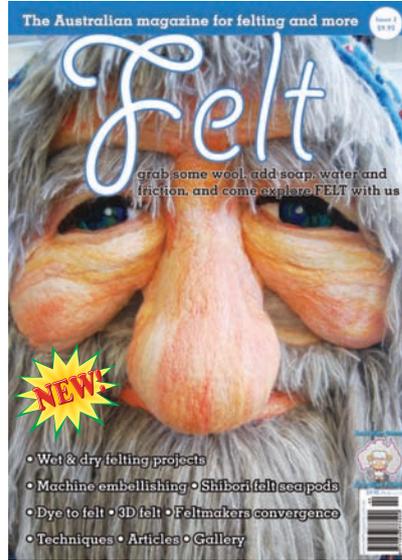


Our class (Christine top left)

Adrienne demonstrating



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