

## » INSIDE STORY: THE TEXTILE STUDIO

## Material girl

Textile designer Caroline Pitcher runs creative courses in her New Forest barn

### Q What did you do before running The Textile Studio?

I trained at Goldsmiths College in London, then went on to do an MA in Textiles in Manchester. I've spent the last 20 years as a costume designer, working on TV programmes like *Father Ted* and the recent series of *The Armstrong and Miller Show*.

### Q When was your eureka moment?

About 18 months ago I said to myself, 'How long do I want to wait to really follow my creative instinct?' Working long hours on a film shoot, I was sitting in a nightclub at 4am, thinking, 'I am in the wrong place, I should be in the countryside, designing'. I had a studio in my garden in London but I decided to rent a barn in the New Forest, near my family, to run design courses on a bigger scale. Currently I run courses in painting on silk velvet, woodblock printing on vintage linens, silk batik and ceramic painting.

### Q Who inspired you?

Sonia Delaunay, a French abstract painter and designer (1885-1979). She produced fantastic fabric designs and also had a wild selection of cars - once even designing a matching coat and motor car! She was my inspiration for buying my own classic car, a Volvo PV444. My mum always wore the most fantastic frocks in the 1950's, so I am sure I owe a lot of my inspiration to her and my Aunt Emily, who was a Saville Row tailor. I'm currently designing a tea towel of Aunt Emily for the homeware range. I also have a tea towel of my classic car.

### Q Any problems?

The only problem I have is trying to juggle two different lives, working in the film industry and also running my design courses.



#### FACT FILE

##### THE COMPANY

The Textile Studio

##### THE BOSS

Caroline Pitcher

ESTABLISHED 2007

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'Keep it simple. The whole world around you is a design source, which just needs to be looked at creatively'

### Q What designs influence you?

I get inspiration from the vintage fabrics and ceramics from the 1950s and 1960s that surround me in the studio. I also have a massive textile and fine art library which I can access easily when I need to. I think having a fine art training helps me to see design and pattern in objects that may seem quite mundane to other people. I have always been mad about fabric and pattern and I think this is probably why ceramics also appeal so much to me, as they involve another form of pattern making.

### Q What gives you a buzz?

The best thing about setting up the studio is that it's a real chance to be creative and to establish an environment for other people to have fun exploring colour and printing.

### Q Where would you like to be in five years' time?

To have the studio full of people on textile and ceramic courses, experimenting with all the amazing ways to print and design. I'd also like my website shop to boast even more great homeware and kitchen products.

#### CAROLINE'S ESSENTIALS FOR SETTING UP A BUSINESS

- Get a good accountant to help you - don't think you know more than you do.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, since knowledge is power. ■ Keep a sense of humour, even when things look bleak; they always look better in the morning.



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