

Inspired by NATURE

'I stitched my way to success'

Mum-of-two Corinne Young, 58, from Carnforth in Lancashire, took a chance on her passion for embroidery.

I'm never happier than when poring over old books about the history of plants or butterflies. I use them for inspiration for my designs, delicately painting them on to my handmade linen paper. Once dry, I'll stitch the piece into shape using a freehand embroidery machine and watch my design come to life as 3D art.

My love of the natural world started young, with sunny afternoons as a child spent wandering around stately homes with my mum. She would pause and point out each variety of plant or flower in the gardens and tell me its history. Then, while other children ran up and down the halls of the historic buildings, I preferred studying the intricate

needlework of floral fabrics woven across cushions and into tapestries. This passion has guided me ever since. Even when I worked in fashion retail management, I longed to be more creative, so every scrap of spare time was spent on vocational courses in fashion and fabrics. When I was training in embroidery, something really clicked. I loved creating beautiful things using nothing more than a needle and thread, just like those fabrics that had captured my imagination as a child. I knew this was something I wanted to pursue further and, after my 40th birthday, I thought, "if I don't do something now, when will I?"

I'd brought up my two daughters, Rachel and Rebecca, as a single parent, but now they were older, I could afford to take some time for myself and explore a new path, so I enrolled on a BA in

textile design at Bradford College. Almost instantly, I realised this was where I should have been all along.

From the start, my work revolved around plants and botanicals, inspired from those early days exploring gardens with my mum. I loved what I created and was thrilled that others seemed to as

well. After I graduated, I was approached by the team making *The Lord Of The Rings* films. They commissioned me to make pieces for a publicity exhibition. I couldn't believe my luck.

INTERNATIONAL SALES

I created a selection of long, hand-painted and embroidered panels that depicted scenes from the books. They were displayed in London and Toronto, Canada. This exposure kick-started my career and, in 2009, I started selling smaller pieces of textile art, such as butterflies, flowers and coastal collections of shells, as well as cards, on a new website I'd set up. My prices now range from £10 to £145. I also created 3D textile plant pots, with "soil" made from embroidered velvet, for £125.

As well as selling my products, I receive commissions from people all over the world who have found me through Instagram. To stay inspired, I immerse myself in my art, even renovating my cottage in Lancashire to reflect my botanical style. And in the summer, I always work in my garden so I can create work from my surroundings.

Once I've finished my assignments for the day, I'll stitch or knit pieces for myself just as a hobby. I'm lucky that my day job is also my passion and I am proud of myself too, for following my heart and steering my life in a fresh direction. It's never too late to make a change.'

• corinneyoungtextiles.co.uk

Each of these women used their love of the countryside to follow their dreams and build the most incredible – and unusual – businesses

Working in the garden surrounded by nature gives Corinne her best ideas



'When I turned 40, I thought: "If not now, when?" I'm so glad I took the plunge'



CORINNE'S TIPS

- Create opportunities and showcase your art wherever possible. It's all about making connections. You never know what could come out of a chance meeting.
- Pursue what you're passionate about – you've got to believe in your work.
- Social media is vital. It's the best form of free publicity and allows you to be discovered by people around the world.

A typical day in my life

8AM Tea and toast with home-made jam. In summer, I'll eat in the garden, but in the winter I take breakfast back to bed with my iPad so that I can answer emails.

9AM Head into the studio to work on commissions and stock for shows or the website.

1PM A light lunch before going into the garden. I grow all the plants I use for inspiration, such as auriculas, hellebores and poppies. I like to do the

cutting and construction of the textile flowers by hand while surrounded by the real thing.

4PM Afternoon tea and fruitcake before a walk around the village.

6PM After dinner, I catch up with admin and social media.

8PM I'm usually found knitting, stitching something for the house or making clothes.

11PM Work's done for the day – time to head to bed with a good book. →



Corinne is never happier than when she's making something inspired by nature



Hundreds of delicate stitches go into each of Corinne's designs

