

Out of the Studio

Being married to a craft gallery owner has given photographer Andrew Arditti a rich and varied source of inspiration. "My wife Jan is a partner in Chester's Arc Gallery," explains Andrew, "and I often photograph stock for the gallery's website, but a chance commission to photograph a Nick Munro mirror in a forest for an 'Outside In' magazine feature got me thinking. I wondered what could I achieve if I tried to take items out of the gallery and photograph them in natural environments."

And so the seed was planted to select pieces both for their visual quality and their location potential. Andrew set off into the fields around his home and experimented to try and capture both the essence of the piece and to place it in an appropriate context. Most of the pictures shown here were taken within a mile radius of his home, but the nearby coastline also provided fresh inspiration.

"Charlie Macpherson's glass spikes are made close to the Wirral coast at West Kirby, so it seemed an obvious fit – that and the link to sand of course. Whereas the mohair Georgina von Etzdorf scarf reminded me of washed up bits of frayed rope I saw on the Welsh coast, so I tried to recreate their effect clinging onto breakwaters in a chilly January," he says.

Andrew also wanted to reflect the seasons and chose the Katie Mawson felt scarf to complement a frosty morning with its 'frost-bitten' tassels. "With so much emphasis on eating food in season, I wanted to reflect this in the seasons and pieces I photographed. For example the Ben Davies pot was an instant fit with the nearby Cheshire sandstone trail on a summer evening to bring out the reds and browns in the surface pattern. His pots are so intricate and detailed, almost like an impressionist painting in the way he mixes complementary colours."

Andrew is hopeful more craftspeople will follow his lead and head outside instead of to the studio. "Having recently invested in a great studio set-up, I'm not turning my back on simple product shots with neutral backgrounds – they are my bread and butter – but taking pieces outdoors and applying a little more creativity can transform the way in which pieces can be perceived and appreciated. After all, craft is all about the partnership of skill and natural materials, so choosing a natural setting makes perfect sense too!"

Having originally studied Product Design and subsequently designed everything from toys to

domestic appliances, Andrew has a well developed sense of form and function, which can be useful when analysing how best to approach their photography. "Managing the available natural light and background colours to bring out the best in each piece has been one of the pleasures in this project," he says.

Andrew is now looking for more inspiring commissions, indoors and out, to challenge further the conventions of craft photography.

"Jan and I see so many makers send in photos of their work for consideration that are really poorly taken and do not do their work justice, it's a real shame, as if the photography is an afterthought. It's a bit like a store's window dresser not keeping their windows clean."

E: andrew@arditti.co.uk
www.arditti.co.uk
(For Arc Gallery see advertisement on page 53)



Charlie Macpherson



Georgina von Etzdorf



Ben Davies