

## collage on sundays: susan stockwell and other infinitely precious things

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Last week I was sad it was the final day of the ‘Woman’s Touch: women artists 1600-2000’ course at the V&A. Although a bit of whistle-stop tour of the ‘greatest hits’ of women’s creative work throughout 4 centuries, it was still a little weekly oasis of interest and stimulation. Next time, make it longer please!



But it finished on a high with a talk by artist Susan Stockwell. Listening to her take us through her work practice and explaining her creative rationale was truly interesting. (Perhaps unusually for an artist she has the gift of being highly articulate and fun to listen to). I’d seen her work at the V&A and at the Tate, where she created an exquisite installation in the Turbine Hall for last year’s Hyperlink festival. Thousands of beautiful little paper boats sailed across the floor of the hall, their decoration all the more intriguing when you realised they were made from old bank notes.

Stockwell uses unusual materials for her sculptures and installations; everything from rubber tyres to toilet paper. Maps, tickets, the guts of computers, cardboard boxes and tea bags have all been transformed into impressive works of art which often combine scale and beauty. Running through her work is the contrast between themes that may be considered fairly 'masculine' such as trade, commerce and globalisation, with items thought of as traditionally female, such as quilts and dresses.



Tea Country, 2000



Colonial Dress, 2009

Stockwell cited the importance of being brought up in a house full of history, politics and her mother's commitment to recycling (she tells how as children they joked there was a world shortage of empty yoghurt pots because they were all in her mother's cupboard; but that couldn't be true because they were all in *my* mother's cupboard). These important parts of everyday life have formed the basis of her work. Stockwell was an inspiration to listen to and Collage fell a bit in love. We will definitely be bringing more of Stockwell's work your way. For more information visit her website [Susan Stockwell](#).