

Jenny Ford

sculptural textiles

www.JennyFordSculpture.com

t: 01386 430065

e: jf@JennyFordSculpture.com



I create unique sculptures for exhibition and to commission from my studio nestled away in a quiet corner of the North Cotswolds. These mysterious, exuberant, abstract forms are constructed in silk velvet, which I have hand-dyed from a rich colour palette, silk dupion and other sumptuous fabrics.

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A longstanding interest in costume detail from Medieval and Elizabethan times has led to my fascination with the late fifteenth century 'gothic' style suit of armour (its detail, precision and especially its presence). Mathematical precision and unusual structures in the natural world also inspire me. Thus, details such as the elongated point of a poulaine, the sinister inner space of a nepenthes pod or precisely pleated ruffs provide indirect starting points for each of my sculptures.

Subconsciously, just the fleeting glimpse of the proud stance of a snowy egret beside a muddy creek or the discovery of a delicately decaying seed head with its promise of regeneration will inspire new work. Sketchbooks are an integral part of my very personal visual language and creative journey and are always to hand to enable me to record such encounters as quick intuitive drawings along with photographs and thoughts in words.

I adore working with silk velvet and metallic organza, so, at present, these cloths predominate in my work. I begin to work on each sculpture by first hand dyeing a length of silk velvet to a rich colour. I then enclose flexible cables into the velvet with a simple hand running stitch. I incorporate other luxurious fabrics such as silk dupion and metallic silk organza to add new textures as the sinuous sculpture evolves.

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My sculptures are made to be discovered - inside, round a corner, emerging from a secluded alcove; or outside, slinking through the branches of a tree, or concealed in a mysterious ancient crumbling ruin. each installation calling for quiet contemplation.