

# Selwedge

## DESIGNER EDGE



CATHY  
JACK  
COUPLAND

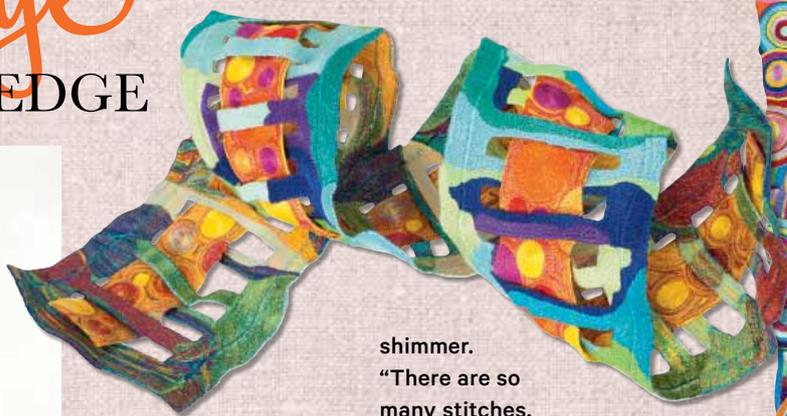
Sydney artist Cathy Jack Coupland goes with her instinct when choosing colours for her art quilts. And the upshot is a glorious feast of eye-candy colour. For her work with circles, she packs in as much visual punch as possible. “Vibrant, passionate, colourful, original and unique” is how she accurately puts it.

“I work intuitively. I have studied colour and its application in design, and I think that’s the key. You have to understand how colour works with the other elements and principles of design,” says Cathy. “Even though I teach colour, I am still learning, and I hope that never stops.”



The starting point is to cover a base of acrylic felt with free machine embroidery, using rayon and polyester threads.

“I stitch onto two layers of felt using two threads. The felt is beautiful to stitch into, since the thread goes into it like butter.” Then comes the dimension, created by the sumptuous density of stitches that adds depth, texture and



shimmer.

“There are so many stitches, they eventually manipulate and distort the felt base. I can see it happening almost immediately when working with circles. The larger the circle, the more the work will distort. Why do I love this? Because colour is all about light, and light hits those delightful emerging circles at different angles,” says Cathy. “With correct lighting, the work just shines.”

You’d think that an artist of this calibre would be working on the latest, strongest, most hi-tech equipment, but not so with Cathy, who for years created her artwork wonders on her mother’s 40-year-old Bernina sewing machine, before updating last year to a Bernina 720.

And, thus encouraged, she has big plans for future works:

“I really want to work larger, as scale is such a visual component, especially for what I do. I adore the process – idea/inspiration, drawing (and redrawing), problem solving and finally working and finishing. There is something deeply satisfying in realising a work from a spark or a light-bulb moment. I do tend to jump from idea to idea, but that’s just me.”

Blending a mass of threads into a magical artwork is more than a day’s work for Cathy. It is her passion and the trigger for her creativity, and it tends to distract her from daily timetables. “It’s a left-brain/right-brain thing. Time is irrelevant,” she says. “The feeling of designing and making a piece of work you know is good and that others also say is good is beyond words. I don’t know why, since I do what I do for myself, not for others.”

*For more information and a gallery of other works, visit Cathy’s website, [www.cathyjackcoupland.com](http://www.cathyjackcoupland.com).*

*– Janai Velez*

