



Welcome to my WORKROOM

MARGEAUX DAVIS'S ideas run wild on a lush property in regional NSW. She invites us to explore her magical surroundings and treasure-trove workroom, where her fabric dolls and animals are 'born'.

By Janai Velez

Nestled between rolling green hills, cow paddocks and macadamia farms is Margeaux Davis's creative sanctuary – a 100-year-old house, which she shares with her family. It's located in a small village, 40 minutes inland from Byron Bay and it is, she says, a "beautiful and serene place".

Her workroom is her favourite spot in the house. It's a tiny but sunny room, with lots of natural light and a view out to her vegetable garden and her sons' treehouse. The room's filled with second-hand finds and handmade pieces, including paintings, antique sewing notions and old books. There's a favourite armchair for when her friends visit.

Her sons also keep her company, but this has varying results. "Most of the time it's great, though it means I often can't find things like my scissors and good pens," Margeaux says. "They sit and draw, chat away, embroider or spread buttons all over the place." Unsurprisingly, most of her work gets done between 9.30am and 3pm, Monday to Friday, when they are at school.

Another visitor is Daisy, a sneaky Labrador from next door. "She's not allowed inside (especially not in my workroom) but occasionally I'll find her asleep under my tables or curled up on the armchair. At the moment, she sleeps under the house, directly beneath the floor of my sewing room."

Margeaux sewed a little as a child, then bought herself a sewing machine and taught herself to make dresses and bags and to alter op-shop finds when she was a teenager. "I've always loved making things, particularly sewing and painting, and I secretly dreamed of earning a living doing that. When I eventually left my job as a ranger [with the National Parks and Wildlife Service], to be at home with my babies, that's what I found myself doing. One day, I created a fabric blue whale and a moth for my little boys. That sparked something in me, and I've had a head full of ideas for things I want to make ever since". As a consequence, she's been designing and making superb





soft sculpture animals and cloth dolls for the past six years.

Her dolls are a perfect mix of fairy-tale charm and old-world style. They're beautifully constructed, with delicate curves creating noses and cheekbones and hair fashioned into elegant buns. They're clad in dresses with hour-glass silhouettes, sleeves trimmed with lace and cloaks embellished with embroidery. They look like they're ready to take a turn in the woods.

"Inspiration usually comes from whatever I'm reading or watching at that time, or sometimes even from paintings or drawings – and it has a lot to do with how I'm feeling," says Margeaux. "I love historical fiction and have just finished reading *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*."

Completing her enchanting woodland world, Margeaux also makes a menagerie of fabric animals – foxes, owls, wombats, moths. Some of these are available as finished projects or sewing patterns, which you can buy through her online store.

Margeaux's creative workroom complements her craft perfectly. "My style of decorating and my style



A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS

OLD GREEN VELVET ARMCHAIR – My favourite piece of furniture is the old green velvet armchair that I sit in to hand sew. It used to belong to my friend's grandmother but was in very poor condition (you couldn't sit in it without ending up on the floor). I fixed it up and reupholstered it, using YouTube tutorials.

CANTILEVER SEWING BOX – A very old wooden folding sewing box that was handed down to me by my mother-in-law. It is beautiful to look at and such a handy design. I keep it on my table filled with ribbons, trims, elastic etc.

BERNINA 1020 SEWING MACHINE – This is such a great sewing machine, with an all metal body. Slow and steady and can sew through the heaviest fabrics with ease. I bought it second-hand a few years ago and, with a service here and there, it sews beautifully.

VICTORIAN SILVER THIMBLE – One of my most precious items is a highly decorative thimble that was given to me by my partner's aunt, who has had it in her family for generations.

of work both reflect my personality and what I love, so I guess they are very similar," she says. "I like natural colours, with an aged or vintage feel. The most important thing for the workroom was to have a long table against the windows so that I can look out into the garden as I'm working. I have old wooden cupboards and shelves to store my fabric, books, treasures, finished work, button tins etc."

As for improvements to the room, she would love an awning or a big tree near the windows to keep the summer sun at bay and a wall/door separating her space from the rest of the house (a curtain suffices in the meantime). "I would definitely welcome more storage space, but with more storage space comes more stuff to store in it. My lack of space keeps my hoarding tendencies in check," Margeaux admits.

To find out more about Margeaux Davis, of Willowynn, visit www.willowynn.com or email margeaux@willowynn.com.