

Artisan Embroidery: Izziyana Suhaimi

Description

Combining a variety of mediums within a work is definitely an artistic trend of late, but none is quite as striking as Singapore-based [Izziyana Suhaimi](#)'s embroidered illustrations and paintings. Part whimsical, part fine-art, each piece conveys a very different set of emotions, showing off her incredible multi-disciplinary skills. She documents her different projects and the journey of her work on her [blog](#), as well as her various exhibitions which she's held in Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines and Japan. Her techniques are very traditional and drawn from the past, but her work is undeniably modern, connecting history with the present.



From 'The looms in our bones'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Izziyana's beautiful pieces are a layering of illustration, watercolor painting and stitching where grey-scale pencil meets bold thread and soft painted strokes. Each series is slightly different – in “The looms in our bones’ the “strange and awkward but attractive” girls, drawn in pencil are adorned with bright, embroidered geometric and floral patterns to form part of the background texture like a tapestry. “Friends to keep you warm’ has girls in knitted hats, headscarves, jumpers and bows over pencil sketches and watercolor expressions; each layer adds extra texture and brings the piece to life, blending a mixture of artistic styles.



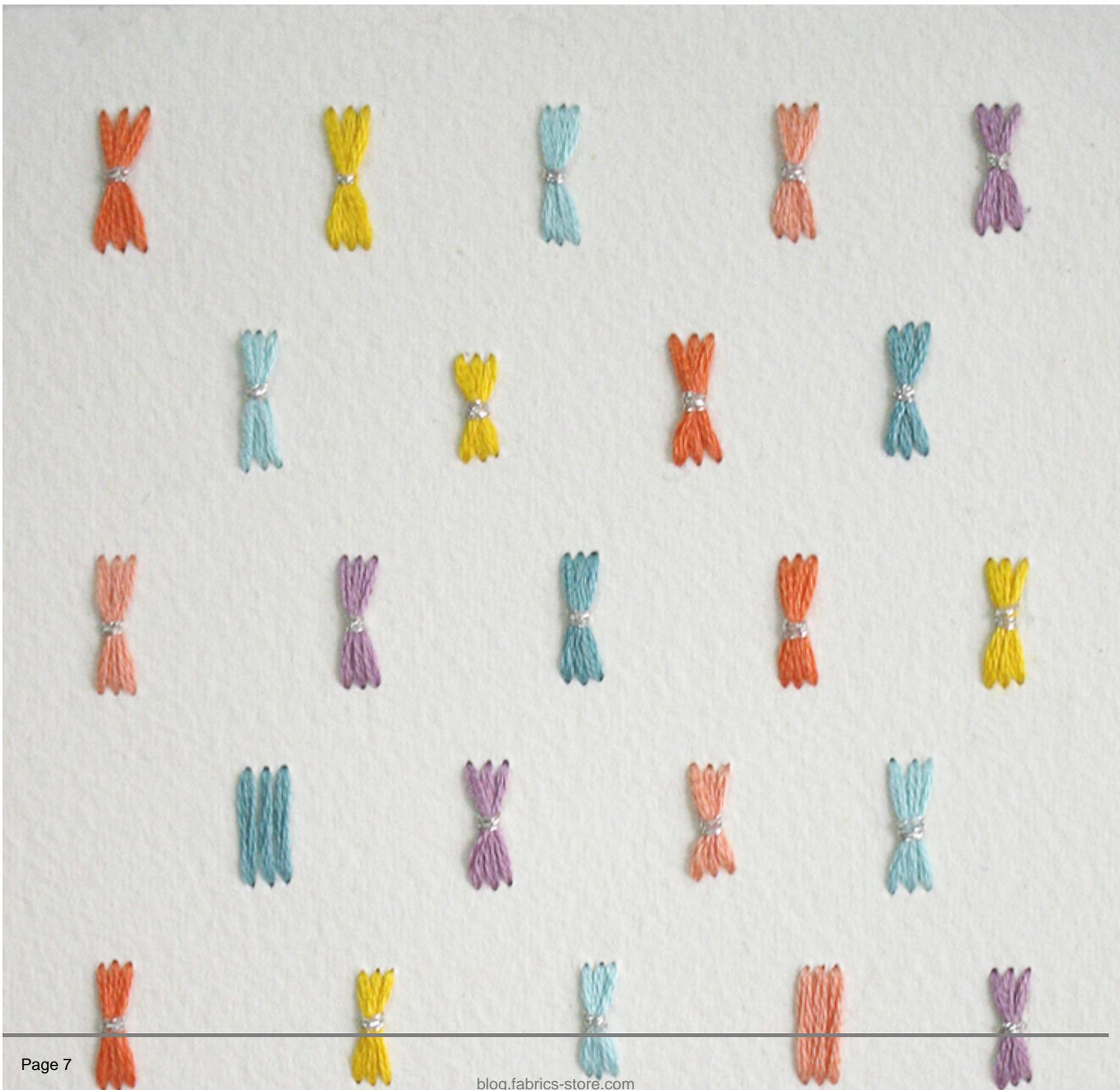
From 'Friends to keep you warm'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Although she achieved a fine arts degree in photography, Izziyana doesn't have any formal training in illustration or embroidery and feels that it is not necessary to express oneself as an artist. She stumbled upon her hybrid technique while doing a school project on medical illustrations of the art (from Henry Gray's "Gray's Anatomy"). She experiment with embroidery and enjoyed it so much that she began incorporating the craft into more and more of her work. The result is the lovely work and collaborations we see today as she continues to blur the boundaries of different mediums.



From 'Friends to keep you warm'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Izziyana describes herself as “Åendlessly curious”Å and she is interested in “Åcollapsing the boundaries between traditional and popular cultures and exploring the links that exist between these two”Å. For Izzi, the beauty of art is in its variety and diversity and embroidery itself is so basic, yet so versatile. As a craft it is inherently functional, but as Izziyana says “Åit has the ability to convey emotions – and most people seem to be able to connect to this medium”Å.





The checkerboard stitch. Slipping
between invisible cracks, we are
like air.

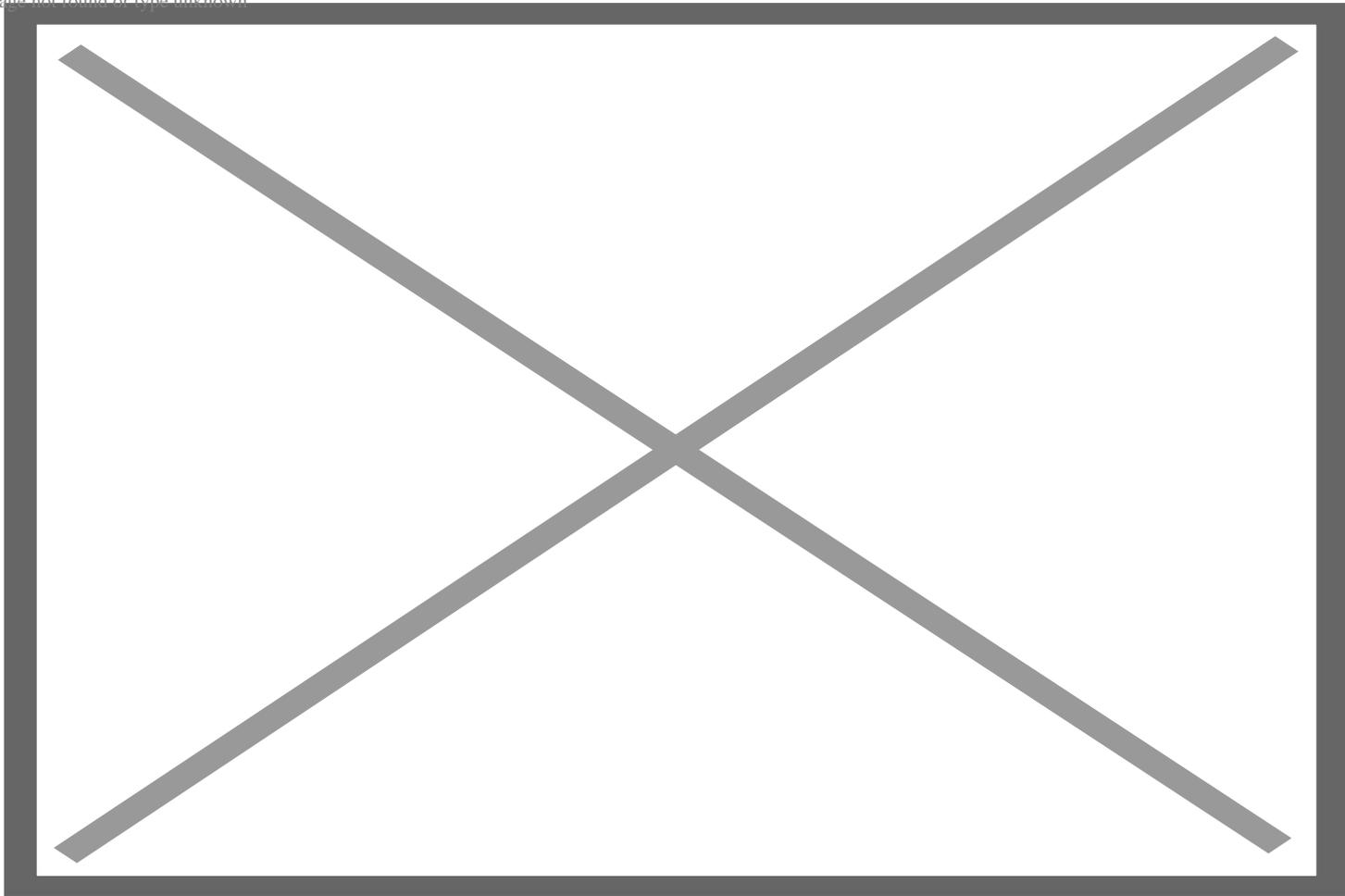


The Cretan stitch. Precariously
balanced between the shape of things
past and the shape of things to
come, you are.

From 'Stitch Studies'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Born in Singapore, Izziyana loved to draw as a child and still often starts her work with an image in her head, which she sketches. She is attracted to “the evidence of the hand and its time-consuming aspect” – embroidery is a quiet and still act and the final piece is “a physical manifestation of time.” Izziyana also enjoys the duality of embroidery and its movements of stabbing, cutting, covering, building, repairing and taking apart. In her art, “every stitch seems to unfold a story and withhold it at the same time.”

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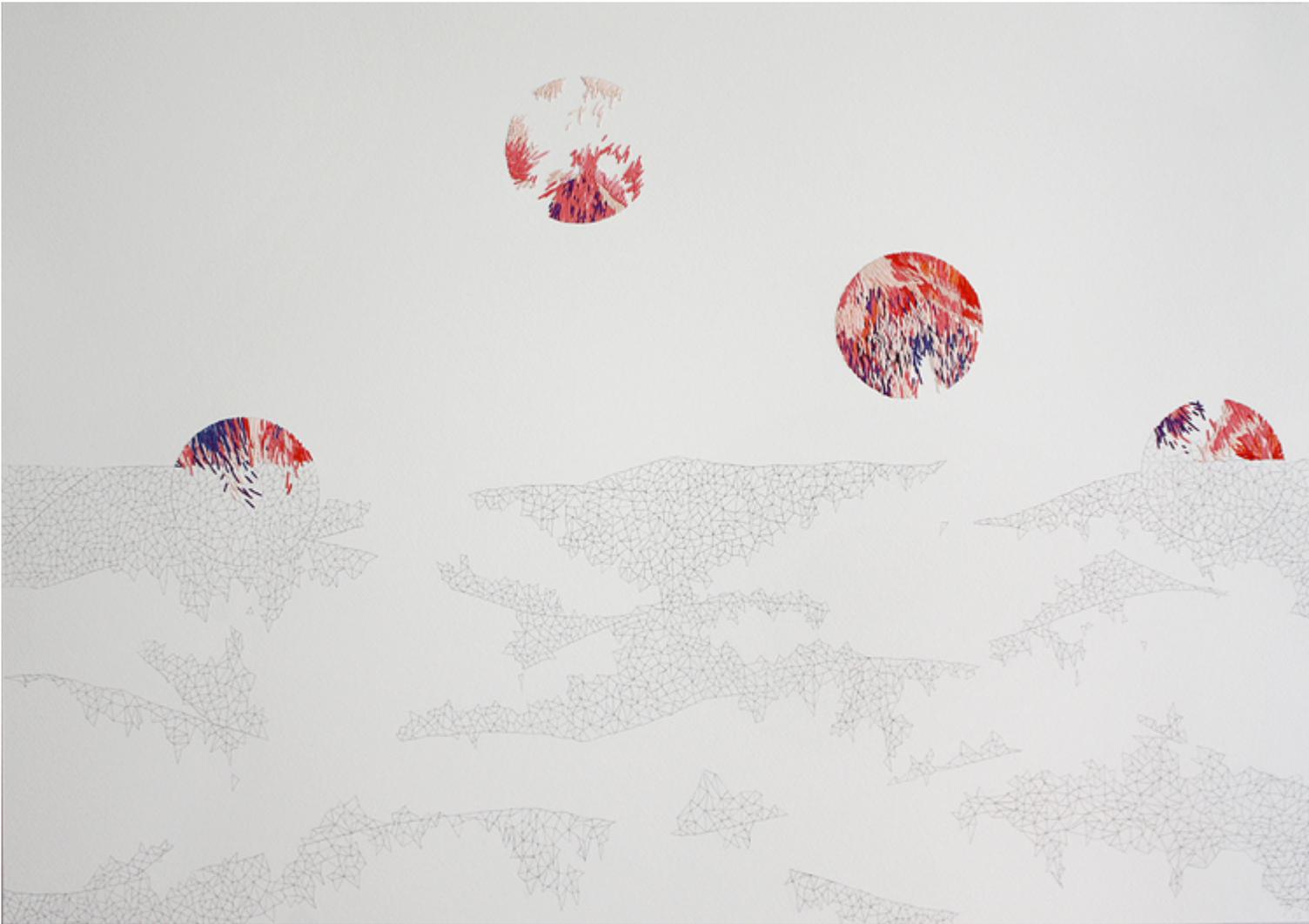


Detail from 'Friends to keep you warm'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

In her “Friends to keep you warm series”, the story is of Izziyana’s inspiration from the fashion world – dying for the clothes from the likes of

Kenzo, Peter Jensen, Marc Jacobs and Tavi she stitched them on to her drawings and watercolor paintings instead; the “Efriends’ in the art refer to both the clothes and the people. “ELets talk about everything’ was more about other people’s stories – a collection of memories sprung from phrases that hold emotional meaning to four individuals and stitched on to a variety of different canvases.

In 2012 Izziyana was featured in [Nylon Singapore](#), the second ever issue of the magazine. Part of the feature was to create an [interpretation of the cover](#), which she did in full embroidery as it was something she had always wanted to do. Her other dream collaborations include working her favourite musicians – Metric, The National and Mew to name a few as well as aspirations to work with Islamic Arts and Arabic calligraphy, and large-scale projects with other artists.



From 'The sun in your eyes'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Inspiration for Izzi comes from everywhere – she believes that every single thing we come across somehow gets translated into the work we create, subconsciously or not; she is a big fan of words, “Åsong lyrics, poetry, books, signage”Å. She’s also influenced by current trends and enjoys what young people are gravitated towards and concerned about – contemporary culture. From there she relates it back history and traditional culture and mixes all eras in her work “Åa sum of all history and even the future”Å. It is always in flux, so for her is always a very rich source of inspiration.



From 'Making working time'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Izziyana says she has been more attracted to the abstract lately, and feels as though she is getting closer to finding what her work is all about. It's a "constant search" and journey – she might find another medium or stick with embroidery for a really long time. Lately she finds herself trying to pin down one idea or one thing that she wants to express and figure out how to say it in a visual form. Both form of expression and the idea behind the work are of equal importance to Izzi "It's hard to like work that's not visually intriguing and it's hard to appreciate work that looks good but is kind of boring".



From 'The looms in our bones'. Photo: Izziyana Suhaimi

Like many of the other embroiderers we've featured in this series, Izzy's attraction to the slow process of embroidery and physical manifestation of creativity contrasts the mass-produced culture of today and its focus on instant gratification. Her artistic journey is only beginning and it will be wonderful to see where she takes this focus next in her work – it's a quality that the rest of our artisan embroiderers share and one that we should continue to value and celebrate.

CATEGORY

1. LIFE LOVERS

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