CLARE SAMS
Textile Artist
Cross Stitch

Cross stitch is an embroidery style where each stitch forms a letter 'X'. The embroidery canvas is an open weave and the stitches are formed by stitching over the mesh to create designs. Patterns are drawn on squared paper and this is used as a chart to guide the stitching. Stranded embroidery cotton is used to embroider the design and a blunt ended tapestry needle is best. The cotton has six strands, which are cut to about 50cm, then thread three strands through the needle. If the fabric is a very open weave all six strands are used, if the fabric is very fine, just one thread would be used.

🔥 WHAT LIGHTS MY CREATIVE FIRE?

My interest and inspirations lie in life's journeys and how the choices a person makes, or events that occur, can have dramatic consequences on where and how people live. The first knitted tapestry I created was 'Hackney Siege' which documented the two week siege in which Eli Hall took a hostage and the police attempted to contain the situation. Using knit to portray this story drew people in, encouraging them initially to believe it was a quirky, friendly homespun tale. In fact, the grim reality incorporated violence and urban desperation, fire, guns and death.

📼 SOUNDTRACK TO MY CREATIVITY

I mostly switch between Radio 4 and Radio 6. Radio 4 is a fantastic way to keep up with current affairs. Radio 6 is the Radio 2 for the Indie generation; it encourages that teenage enthusiasm for music and is great for discovering unusual new sounds too.

🎥 MY WORKSHOP

I have a designated work space, but always end up working in the house anyway. It's a complete mess which, at times, overtakes the whole house! It is uncontainable.

👓 RECOMMENDED READING

The cross stitch book
by Mary Gostelow 1982 Batsford

Manga Cross-Stitch
by Helen McCarthy Steve Kyte

🧵 MY TOOLS & MATERIALS

Fabrics, yarn, graph paper, sewing and knitting machines. An array of felt tip pens. An assortment of needles.

🏪 SHOPPING LIST

10cm & larger embroidery hoop

Embroidery scissors

Stranded embroidery cotton

Plain grid paper

Aida fabric *(avail in a range of 12 - 18, holes per inch)*

Binca embroidery fabric for junior embroiderers

Stranded embroidery cotton

Thread storage box

📦 SUPPLIERS

The supplier(s) listed are local to and recommended by the Maker who created this box

FRANKLINS
13 – 15 St Botolphs Street, Colchester CO2 7DU
Monday – Saturday, 9:00am – 5:30pm
01206 563955
www.franklins.directknitting.co.uk

FABRIC8
12 – 14 Head Street, Colchester CO1 1NY
Monday – Saturday, 9:00am – 5:30pm
01206 763432
www.fabric8online.co.uk

🧵 DEFINING MY CRAFT?

My work as a textile artist documents people and places on the fringes of society, generally focusing on urban environments. I use knit to tell gritty tales because it conjures up feelings of warmth and security, probably because it's one of the first textiles we come into contact with as babies. It brings to mind unthreatening and familiar qualities, prompting us to think of home and domesticity. When I use knit, I utilise these emotions and juxtapose them with the tragic or uncomfortable elements of my narratives to cause an unnerving collision.

👥 FIND FELLOW EMBROIDERERS

Colne and Colchester Embroideries Guild hold regular meetings and exhibitions in the area, website: *www.embroiderersguildeast.org.uk/branches/branches-a-j/colne-colchester*

⤬ MORE ABOUT MY WORK

www.ukhandknitting.com/register_of_knitting_artists.php#Clare

www.colchesterhistoricbuildingsforum.org.uk/drupal

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bourne-mill

www.amillionminutes.org/projects/Clare-Sams

⤬ BARTER WITH ME

Come and get crafty with me as I will be running an event called 'Stitching St. Botolphs' at The Waiting Room on a monthly basis from February until May where we will be creating a tapestry of the area to capture landmark buildings using textiles. Learn something new and help me complete my project at the same time.