

# SITE MAPPING IN ART

By Karen Elzinga

Art is all around us, and I do mean all around us, you can turn just about every item currently around you right now into some structural art form. From drawing an image onto a dusty bench to collecting scrap pieces and delivering them in such a way that beauty can be found. Art truly is in the eye of the beholder.

To start this lesson off, make a simple art work from a collection of items in or around your home and grid them like this, when your done take a photograph and list your ingredients, try to gather as many items as you can. This can be a fantastic material reference tool for revisiting later in your artistic career, and the more you add the bigger and better your knowledge and usage of varying materials in your art will be.

Think like a bower bird and collect...



## Collection of textiles.

Foil, tissue paper, tissues, rope, wool, bark, leaves, cotton, plastic, latex, cardboard, lace, pebbles, bubble wrap, silk, satin, towelling, animal hair, fur, string, nylon, denim, leather, band-aids, fabric, string, leaves, bark, tissue paper, denim, ribbon.

Don't just stop at one you can keep doing these until your reference bank is bursting with material ideas.



Building a reference bank doesn't have to be boring. Getting a little artistic can go a long way to broadening your creative art knowledge. Every time you investigate a material your reference bank grows fuller and wiser, because not only have you collected a simplified material you have tested its ability.

-Cut...was it easily cut, or hard to use with scissors, did you need a knife or maybe a saw to cut it.

-Glued....was it easily glued, did it required stronger glue, if so what type, PVA, Craft, Super glue, no nails, Clag, perhaps something else

Already as part of building your reference bank you have invested these two simple tests and have now have added to your knowledge of working with these materials.

I cannot tell you as an artist the importance of building your material investigation bank of knowledge, it is the singular most important piece of knowledge I can give you from one artist to another. If you know and understand what various materials can do, take, bend, scrunch, tear, rip, fray, burn, dent, mark, bind, paint etc your well on your way to being an artist.

Here's another exercise you may like to try....

Collect items around your house that vary slightly on a scale in colour starting from light to dark, try to aim for them to be of the same material.

Place them all together in a artistic looking way that demonstrates the sequence of colour from dark to lightest, and photograph them, change the colour to sepia or black and white and play around with the brightness and contrast of the image

Let's have a look at a few of my examples of how you can turn the simplest of materials into artworks.



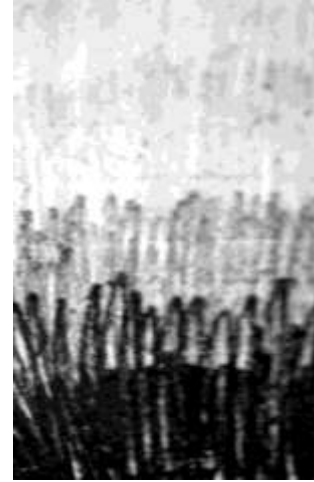
# Grey Scales



Unspun fleece



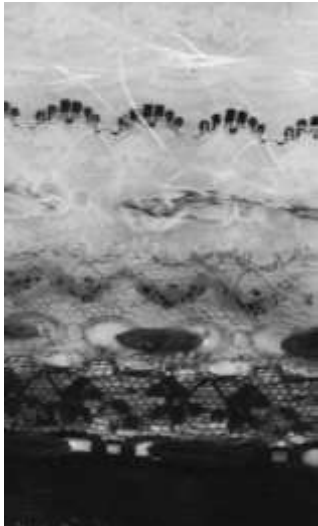
Spun wool



Lead pencil



Bark



Lace



Marabou Feathers



Pencils  
Foam  
Paper  
Fleece  
Fabric  
Tinsel  
Wool on  
fishing  
net

## Mapping in Art

Art work mapping is not a new concept, artists have used mapping principals to depict artworks for a very long time, artists depict rows upon rows of houses in streets, some depict farm lands from aerial views, some utilize actual world and country maps and put their own spin on them, whilst others use natural resources to map the patterns caused by natural effects.

The later is what this lesson entails, looking at how to map patterns in nature.

So where do you start, well try walking right outside your front door and take yourself to an area where beauty reins supreme. For me that place is the beach and in point the rocks- A fantastic resource for naturally occurring patterns.

## What to do....

Photograph everything! The more complex images you have the more you'll have to work with, take far away landscapes, up close and super up close images at any patterning you think you can use to enhance your map making artworks.

Let's take a look at my examples.

# Mapping an Artwork Idea



## PORT CARTWRIGHT

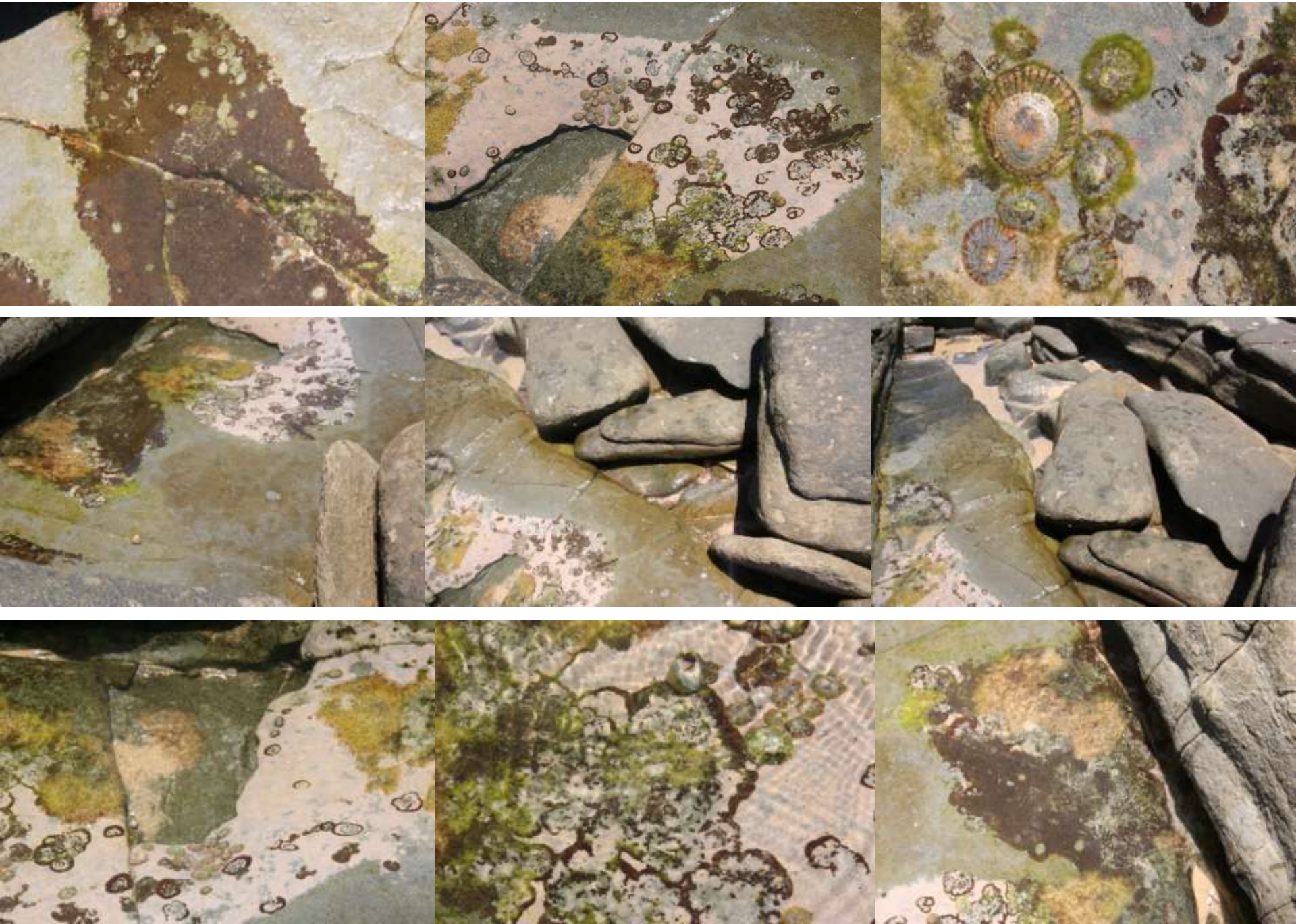
Home of the Port Cartwright light house which stands on the cliffs directly above the spot I have chosen.

The light house was placed here in 1978 at the mouth of the Mooloolabah river on the Sunshine coast Queensland. This spot is a tourist attraction, with its large show of rocky outcrops for people to explore and walk right around the head land. There is an abundance of sea creatures to see like crabs, sea snails, fish, cru stations and micro organisms as well as colourful rock patterns due to mould, algae and sea weed growth. The perfect place for mapping patterns.





Site – Take up close images so you get a great indication of patterning effects.





Site- Take a range of near and far images so you get perspective





**Time observed -9am**

Area has 1-2cm of water covering as they waves come in and out, visibility is not affected.



**Time observed – 12.30pm**

Area has high and full coverage of water, visibility is around 10%, waves continue to come in and out of the area, making it an inaccessible area.



**Time observed 3.30pm**

Area has no water covering rocks at all, some areas of rock are completely dry, lightening them in colour from when in their wet form.



**Time observed 6pm**

The sun has moved and the area is becoming darker, water is starting to crash back into the area fully covering the site.



Another great idea to take photographs at different times of the day, this can change dramatically how your patterns looks and again adds to your knowledge bank.

1. **Know the history of the site** - This was the site of the third lighthouse erected on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia. It was chosen after the lighthouse based off the Coloundra city coast line became surrounded by growth and development of high rise buildings meaning the lighthouse became part of the scenic view of high rise lights. This made it impossible for boats entering the river mouth to find there way around the rocky coastline. So in 1978 a new lighthouse was erected at the mouth of the Mooloolabah river to guide boats into the busy river port. The lighthouse is operated automatically and stands high on the hill top overlooking a wide view of rocks around its headland.



2. **Change in the site** - Changes that happened in this site were the tide coming in and out, flooding the area totally through to very little water at all being in the site. Other notable changes were the shifting of the sun shading different parts of the site at different times throughout the day. When the water came in and out small changes were noted such as moving of sand, shells, and fish life around the site. Rocks when wet looked darker then when they were dry and colours were richer in the algae, moss, mould and shells.

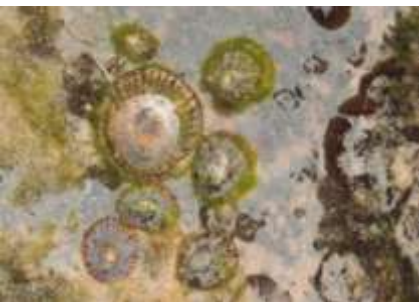


**Rocks were a darker colour when wet then they were when dry**

Understand your site, it's history, any changes that occur naturally, this will help you sell your art because it's tells your viewers about your connection to your art.



**3. Intersections and interventions within the site-** This site is a gathering of natural elements apart from the lighthouse that sits above the rocks high on top of the head land. It is filled with large and small rocks, moss, algae, micro organisms, cru-stations, sea snails, crabs and plant matter. Water cascades over and around the rocks filling small and large holes within the rocks making natural pools of water, where tiny fish life nestle and feed.



**4. Contradictions and Contrasts –** There are several contradictions in this site including: Hard rocks against the softness of moss and algae.



**Hard**



**Soft**

Sharp objects such as broken shells or cru-stations against blunt objects such as rocks and sand



**Sharp**



**Blunt**

Become  
an  
expert in  
your  
mapping  
area.

Wet areas such as wave effected areas and rock pools against dry areas of rocks and sand.



**Wet**



**Dry**

Lightly coloured areas such as sand, fish, shells against darker coloured areas of rocks and shaded rock areas.

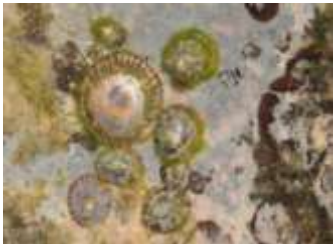


**Light Colours**



**Dark Colours**

Traditionally bright colours of shells (orange, blue, green, pink) and mosses bright green against traditionally dull colours of rocks, (grey, black).



**Bright**



**Bright**



**Dull**

Light weighted items such as sand, shells, wildlife against heavy items such as large rocks.



**Light**



**Light**



**Heavy**

Tall areas such as cliff face, light house pitted against short items like sand, shells, moss, algae, rocks.



**Tall**



**Tall**

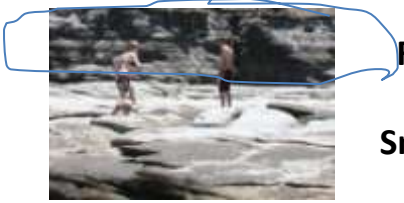


**Short**



**Short**

Rough contrasting factors like rocks untouched by water, against rocks touched by water erosion making them round and smooth to touch.



**Rough**

**Smooth**

Movement of wildlife, crabs, fish, micro-organisms and water, against the stillness of rocks.



**Movement**



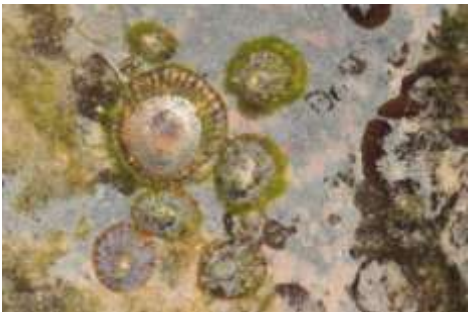
**Movement**



**Stillness**



5. Patterns in the site – This site was full of patterns made from cru-stations, algae, moss, mould, water mark age, water erosion and from animal inhabitancy.





Let's move onto real mapping artwork design by testing out 3 different style of map making techniques, Linear, Dimensional and Aerial.

This photo defines where all the next mapping artwork were completed.

Linear map – With the linear I depicted a wider area, but still keep the main part of the site in the theme. This picture depicts the widened area. This map will be depicted using sewing as the medium material.

Dimensional map – I wanted to confine the dimensional map to focus on a 3x3mt area featuring the rock patterning, water entering the site and large rocks. This map will be depicted by using fabric as the medium material.

Aerial Map – I wanted to confine what I did on the dimensional map even further by reducing the area to 1x1mt and take stand out the features of shell cru stations. This map will be depicted by using Fabric and sewing as the medium materials.



# Linear map



Cru stations



Lighthouse and trees



Rocks and boulders



Incoming waves



Algae and moss





Linear Maps – the creation of maps using lines to depict.

Sewing art is a real art form, I can't say that it's my art form or an art form that I particularly like or do well, but I did want to show you one, you could also depict by using alternate mediums, such as art liners, pencil, paint or whatever you like. I believe in pushing my artistic boundaries as an artist, it is a great way to see what you can do and even surprise yourself at being possibly good at, not always but it does happen sometimes.

Let's break  
down my art  
work so you can  
understand  
where my lines  
have come  
from.



Picture 1. Shows a depiction of the Point Cartwright lighthouse that's sits perched high above on the rocks on grassy and hilly outcrop.



Picture 2. Shows the public interest in this tourist attraction, and the beachside location by the person wearing bathers and the water slowly filling the area as the tide changes.





Picture 3 . Depicts the algae, moss and microorganism patterning on the rock surface.



Picture 4. Depicts again the human interest in the setting and hills that extend to the rocky edges of the ocean that show great diversity in nature.



## Dimensional Mapping

The word says it all... DIMENSIONAL, what is it, well any form that has dimension or height around it.

This artwork is made from varying fabric prints, thickness and coarseness of the fabric, and colour value.

Select your fabrics carefully as they can make or break an artwork, you want to search high and low to get fabrics that will go the extra miles in depicting your scene whilst looking aesthetically good, don't forget an ugly art work depicting a beautiful spot accurately may never be sold, so a little dramatic licence is effective to beautify your work so it is more pleasing to the eye whilst not infringing on your message.

Let's take a  
look at the  
dimensional  
art work.

# Dimensional map



Cru station Patterning



Dimensional Rocks



Flat base rock



Waves crashing through rocks



Moss and algae







Picture 1. Depicts the algae, moss and animal and microorganism activity on the rocks



Picture 2. depicts the layers of rocks and water.





Picture 3. Depicts the tide changing and the torrent of waves crashing around the rocks.



Picture 4. Shows the ecosystem and the interaction of algae, moss, rocks and ocean water.

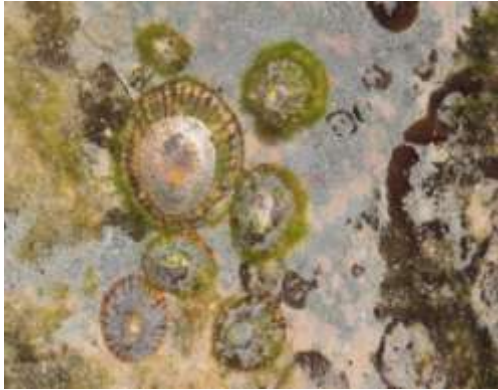
Aerial Map – Aerial means from above, an elevated position, from a height over looking an area.

You could do all your map making from a Linear, Dimensional or Aerial perspective or do one of each as I have done to show you, my advise is to try all three perspectives to gage the one you enjoy doing the most. If you like all three, it would make for a varied exhibition and very interesting. Its a very thought provoking style of working is mapping art, because often it tends to have a environmental almost political feel to it, weather done purposely or not, your depicting sometimes tender issues such as land degradation, over population, or the effects of nature on the land, if you want to have a say in the world art mapping is a good choice.

Let's have a  
look at Aerial  
Mapping



## Aerial map

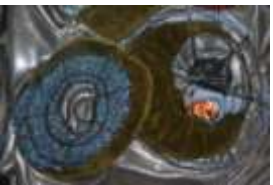


### Aerial view

I was inspired by the shell cru-stations and patterning on the rocks for the aerial view map.



Water



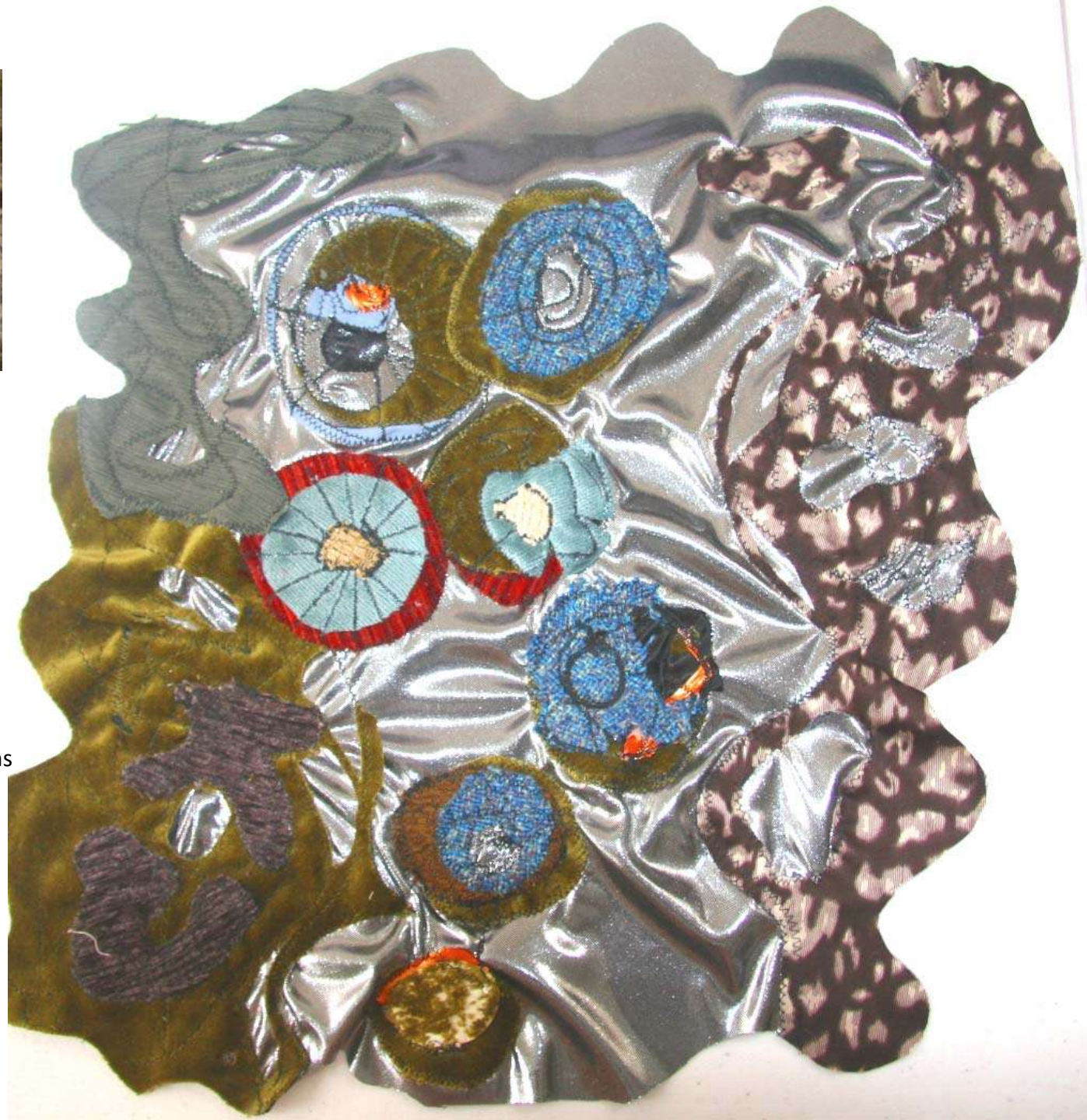
Shell cru stations



Moss and  
algae



Rocks









Even the stars are mapped, with numerous artworks depicting everything from stars, to black holes, planets to meteorites. Obviously it's a little hard to go there and take your usual photographs, so hit the internet and do some heavy duty photo research. The list of map potential is huge.

Let's try one out, I'll call it *Meteorite Odyssey*

*Step 1 – Research and sew together meteorites using fabric.*





**Step 2.** The meteoroids were then sewn onto silver stretch fabric in a way that stretched the fabric, so that when finished the meteoroids would look as if they were being catapulted through space.

**Step 3.** The next step was sewing wool onto a flat piece of curtain backing in circles

**Step 4.** Fabric strips were sewn in a circle, slightly over lapping the past fabric.



**Step 5.** Paint the background circles and attach the meteoroids.

**Step 6.** Create the dimensional centre piece by smearing gap filler and once dried a silver circle was sprayed with silver spray paint.

**Step 7.** Glass resin was added to the painted and gap filled areas, one very thin coat only was used, and I worked it to create pitted holes so it looked like a crater effect, which worked very well and adds a dimensional effect to the flat painted areas.





123cm x  
123cm in  
size.

Finished  
Work.



*Meteorite  
Odyssey*

I'm sure your getting the hang of mapping by now, so think about what else could be mapped, an Appaloosa horse, a Dalmatian dog, a leaf, a crop, all manner of things can be mapped if you think about it, so let's go a little further a field and map a bunch of flowers, why not the only person stopping you is you. Art is about interpretation and pushing boundaries.

That's why art is forever changing, if artists didn't push the boundaries we would still all be painting like Van Gogh, or Rembrandt, yes they were great but does their work go well in the modern house of the year 2016-17-18-19, yes as a historical piece of beauty but it does not reflect the age of the now. So why do paintings painted this year reflect that because artists chose to push the boundaries of what was considered fashionable at the time. As a result we continue to evolve. So let's try mapping a bunch of flowers individually but piece it collectively as a whole.



## Step 1. Find the fabric

This work I wanted to try something bright and cheery, I wanted to represent a bunch of flowers done with fabric and adding more and more fabrics and using linear features to both join the fabrics together but also to be decorative at the same time.



## Step 2. Cut the fabric into circles and wool into length.



## Step 3. Match fabrics into eye catching colour combinations



Step 4. Create individual linear featured mola's. Mola work is a process of fabric layering.



Step 5. Arrange individual mola's into group mola presentation on fabric backing.





Finished work. 137cm x 116cm x 6cm depth

*Bunch of Flowers*



Mapping can simply be a way of working through the process of your ideas, or it could be how the end product or art work is revealed as map like in feature. That is up to how you personally interpret mapping. Maybe it's a bit of both, to me it is a bit of both, a structured plan such as the bunch of flowers work where by bringing together small individual flowers and mapping their relationship with each other, is highlighted through the idea of mapping but does not appear as an end product to be a mapped art work.

Ultimately it is up to you whether you wish to be called a map artist, or simply work in a fashion or process that is more openly mapped in procedural nature rather than an obvious mapped outcome in look.



I hope that you have enjoyed my look into Mapping and Art, and now feel a little more confident about how to map artworks and ideas for creating them.

This has been another Karen Elzinga Art Lesson for more [click here](#)

