

**By Our Own Hand (Boredom Is Always
Counter-Revolutionary)**



By Our Own Hand is an artwork made with the participation of individuals and organisations in Wandsworth who are working with stitching, applique, or other techniques involving textiles and cloth. Wandsworth was the home of Evelyn and William De Morgan, two leading figures in the British Arts and Crafts Movement, whose work did much to shape our ideas of craft today, and owing to its strong networks of artisanal and community crafts producers and related activities.

Each participant will develop, design and make an individual panel (or panels), forming the component letters of the phrase "Boredom Is always Counter-Revolutionary", originating from a text by Guy Debord. The panels are approximately 16 inches by 23 inches in size, and feature either one of the letters of the text, or a decorative element that will function as a spacer in the assembled work of 42 parts. The designs will be generated and produced with the guidance of expert artists, practitioners and crafts people associated with the project.

It is envisioned that participants will be a combination of individual makers and hobbyists, as well as members of community groups. Given the nature of the project and the work requiring a degree of application it is best suited for adults and older teenagers.

There will be regular meetings throughout the project for people taking part, led by embroiderer and educator James Hunting, to discuss the progress of the work, to receive input and advice, or to develop new skills with a range of visiting artists who will be operating in an advisory role. In addition, a number of visits and talks by practitioners and experts are being arranged for those who wish to discover more about the history and world of textiles and stitching.

We will also be working with a number of partner organisations and institutions, with further details to be announced shortly. All materials and associated production costs for participants and for the project will be paid for by Matt's Gallery.

There will be an exhibition of the completed work, at a dedicated venue Wandsworth, consisting of the component cross-stitch tapestries, quilts and other needle works, all brought together to form a large textile artwork. This will be accompanied by a full colour limited edition publication and online presence through the Matt's Gallery website, featuring an accredited full-page colour reproduction of the panel made by each participant, as well as documentation and specially commissioned writing on the finished project. All participants will receive copies of the publication.

The starting point of **By Our Own Hand** is a cross-stitch tapestry made by Richard Grayson (see image above) between Christmas 2012 and Easter 2015, that consists of approximately 22,000 cross- stitches, spelling out 'Boredom in Always Counter-Revolutionary".

This work references the practice of Alighiero e Boetti, an Italian conceptual artist, considered to be one of the leading members of the art movement *arte povera*; especially the series of iconic embroideries that he produced in the latter part of his career, which were made by Afghan embroiders.

This phrase comes from a text by Guy Debord published in the Situationist International Journal in 1962, which later became a popular graffiti in the May 1968 events in Paris. A central question for Debord was how might people find meaning and significance in the modern world, a world that alienated people not only from their work, but also from their experience of life. Boredom to him was a modern phenomenon. He considered play, spontaneity and acts of making as necessary for a fulfilling life, and as ways in which individuals might engage and take back control.

Richard Grayson is an artist and curator based in London. His work explores the ways that individuals and groups generate ways of reading the world and the role that art and music plays in communicating world-views from the individual to social areas. Recent exhibitions include *Speech Acts*, UTS Gallery Sydney, 2015, *His Master's Voice*, HMKV Dortmund 2015, and *Nothing Can Stop Us Now* Matts Gallery/Dilston Grove, 2014. He was curator of the 2002 Sydney Biennale *The World May Be Fantastic* and '*A Secret Service*', a Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition, 2006.

Matt's Gallery is one of the UK's leading art galleries and has supported the making of new and innovative work since its foundation in 1975. In 2014 director Robin Klassnik was awarded an OBE, in recognition of his contribution to contemporary art in the country.