



*These vessels* have been constructed from drawings on paper of Agapanthus plants which grow outside my studio window in south Tasmania. The Agapanthus plants began to represent for me, a visual metaphor for my place in the world and for the fragility of life.

Whilst observing the changes in the plants throughout the seasons I related those changes to my own life. Content now, in my own space and at the 'Grandmother' stage of life, the plants represent how we both continued to evolve while being grounded and entwined in the one place.

The process of growth and change bring a sense of inner calm and stillness to my circle of life. I began this process by making a series of observational drawings of the plant in its final stages of flowering, as a way of understanding as much as I could about the complexity of the structure and essence of my subject.

The next stage was to experiment with the drawings by abstracting them. Isolating details and expanding the format with subsequent drawings and collage, changed and evolved the imagery.



The outcome of this abstraction, were the vessel shapes and once that seed was planted, I knew how to proceed and began to experiment with ways of constructing stitched paper vessels.







I started with a paper square, and with the corners torn off, it became a circle. I then began to tear the circle into a spiral. Setting the sewing machine to free machine embroidery by lowering the feed dogs and attaching a darning foot, I began to stitch the spiral shape back together into a bowl or vessel, beginning with a flat base and then forming the bowl shape as I stitched.



Once I was satisfied with the form, I decided to make more drawings of the plant, which was now in a different stage of growth and then tear those drawings into spirals – deconstructing and then reconstructing them into stitched vessels.

I decided to use a large sheet of water colour paper onto which I applied white gesso. This made an interesting surface/ground on which to draw with pencil, pen, ink and wash.



This drawing, capturing the quality and essence of the plant, then became a vessel, which is the original purpose of the plant, to be a vessel, for continual growth and evolvments, carrying memories about its process and the fragility of life. This connection to my own life as a vessel is what interests me.

The next stage happened with a 'happy accident'. The sun shone through my studio window directly onto some of the finished vessels and the original plants, casting interesting shadows and shapes. These marks initiated another series of drawings and in an excited state of anticipation I began to draw. I used a sheet of watercolour paper which I had previously prepared with black gesso, drawing with white ink and white charcoal pencil. I made drawings on both sides this time so that the completed vessel would have imagery inside and out. The black vessel drawing was then ready to be deconstructed by tearing into the spiral shape and then reconstructing by stitching into a vessel. I intentionally left loose threads hanging, which reconnected with the original plant form. The last touch was then to expose fragile holes with a soldering iron to complete the effect.







In this series of stitched paper vessels the Agapanthus plant and my own life of contentment and change became entwined. The vessels represent for me the strength and stability of nature and life but also the fragility and connectedness, the attachment and non attachment, a visual metaphor for my place in the world and for the fragility of life.

