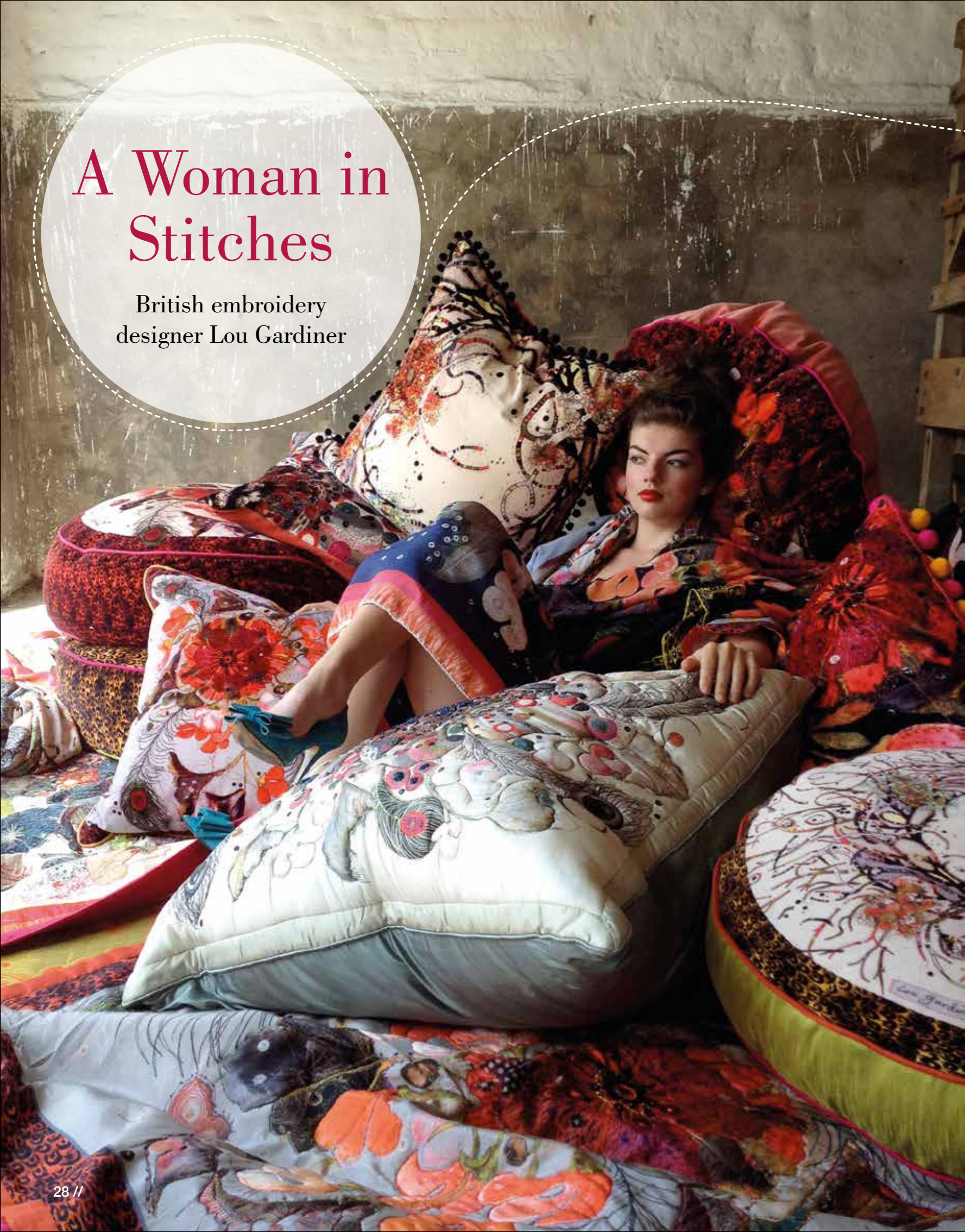


A Woman in Stitches

British embroidery designer Lou Gardiner



If the word 'embroidery' conjures up visions of a noble art - but which is, perhaps, a bit Jane Austen - it's time you met Lou Gardiner.

This British artist is bringing an explosive dimension to stitchery that is as uncompromising and out there as any maverick Brit Art exponent. So it's not a surprise to hear she has exhibited at The Saatchi Gallery and had her work displayed in the coveted windows of that temple of style: Liberty in London's Regent Street. In contrast, she's also been on Radio 4's Woman's Hour, reflecting perhaps an art that defies any one category or audience.

Lou says: "I push this niche art form in new directions as much as possible, continuously promoting stitch as an exciting, rich and beautiful medium, which it is!" A graduate of Goldsmith's College, London with a Textiles BA (with honours),

Lou yo-yo'd between London, the North West and six-year spell in a studio in Bristol.

Her portfolio shows a certain restlessness, always developing and pushing new boundaries. She says that "I can now drive a sewing machine like an Aston Martin... I create large figurative, floral and flamboyant pieces of artwork using rhythmic, repetitive drawing, intense and intricate stitches, paints, appliqué and inks."

Her unbridled approach to the art form has not gone unnoticed. She gained a scholarship from The London Embroiderers' Guild and now exhibits internationally.

Meanwhile, as you can see, her work has expanded into luxurious crafted pieces, ranging from sumptuous silk scarves to velvet pillows and poufs.



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