ROB HOWELL

TEXTILE ARTIST



Summary

Rob Howell graduated with a degree in embroidered textiles in 1988. He has worked in arts and culture outside textiles for many years, bringing extensive experience in senior arts management and commissioning. He has now returned to his textiles practice and is rebuilding his portfolio. In the past, he exhibited widely, completed several commissions and served as the artist-in-residence at the Royal Welsh National Eisteddfod in 1992. The Welsh National Collection in Llanidloes holds a large quilt (Triangles 1991), and several pieces are in private collections. He worked for several years as a community artist and made trade union banners for union branches across the UK. He was also commissioned to restore and make new ecclesiastical textiles for several churches. More recently, he has shown in several group exhibitions, including The British Textile Biennial and The Art of Textiles and Noir (Queen Street Gallery, Neath), Cliff Edge (Cromer Artspace) and Faces and Places (DoT Gallery, Cockermouth). He has undertaken commissions for Blackburn BID and Bacup Market. His work largely takes the form of banners or wall quilts. He is interested in the message - be that a slogan or image- though pattern, colour and texture are also important.

61A Manor Road, Blackburn Lancashire, BB2 6LX

rob@robhowelltextiles.com | 07974 809435

www.robhowelltextiles.com | @rob_howell_textiles

Education

1985 - 1988 BA Honours Textile Design (Embroidery). Birmingham Polytechnic (2.1)

1991 - 1992 Postgraduate Diploma in Recreational Arts for the Community, Manchester Polytechnic (Distinction)

2014 - 2016 MA Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship - Erasmus University Rotterdam

Arts and Cultural Leadership

1992 - 1996 Community Arts Worker, Banner maker and Co-Director, Bannerworks Cooperative, Huddersfield

1996 - 2004 Head of Arts, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

2004 - Co-Director, Culturapedia (B Corp & ACE NPO)

Textile Artist

After graduating, Rob Howell worked as a textile artist on a number of private and ecclesiastical commissions, including St Michael's Manor Park, London; St Thomas' Huddersfield, and Chester Wesley Methodist Church. He participated in several exhibitions, including a solo exhibition in the Craft Shop at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
In 1992, he was appointed Artist in Residence at the National Eisteddfod in Aberystwyth, where he was charged with creating two large, double-sided banners for a brand-new Leisure Centre.
While working at Bannerworks, he designed and produced many Trade Union banners for the newly formed Unison, the NUT, the T&GW, etc.; he also restored ecclesiastical banners.
After a break in practice, he started a new series of banners entitled the Universal Protest Project, which was exhibited as part of the British Textile Biennial in 2019 and again at the Burnley Words Festival in 2022. Blackburn Business District (now in the collection of Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery) and Bacup Market also commissioned further banners.
His current work forms an extended series called Cwlwm Dynion or The Bond of Men. There will be a solo exhibition within the British Textile Biennial in October 2028 with a focus on identity.

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Selected exhibitions 2026

Exhibition	Location	Date
Blackburn Open	Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery	March 2026
The Art of Textiles	Queen Street Gallery, Neath	June 2026
Portraits	Gallery 35 (online)	September 2026
Icons of Life	Collect Art (online)	September 2026
Cliff Edge - Textile Art on the Brink	Cromer Arts Space	October 2026
Faces & Spaces	Dot Gallery, Cockermouth	October 2026
Textiles Open	The Bureau Centre for the Arts, Blackburn	October 2026
Black & White	Open Call For Artists (online)	October 2026
The Whitaker Open	The Whitaker, Rawtenstall	October 2026
Noir	Queen Street Gallery, Neath	November 2026

Selected publications 2026

Title	Publication	Date
Artist Interviews	Open Call For Artists	August 2026
Ghosts	Wiro Mag	September 2026
Icons of Life	Collect Art	September 2026
101 Artbook - Faces Edition	Arts to hearts	November 2026

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