



RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED

CAROLINE CHISHOLM, DOMESTICITY, AND THE VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS

FLOSSIE PEITSCH Central Goldfields Art Gallery, Maryborough, VIC 2026

RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED

Central Goldfields Art Gallery

Maryborough Victoria

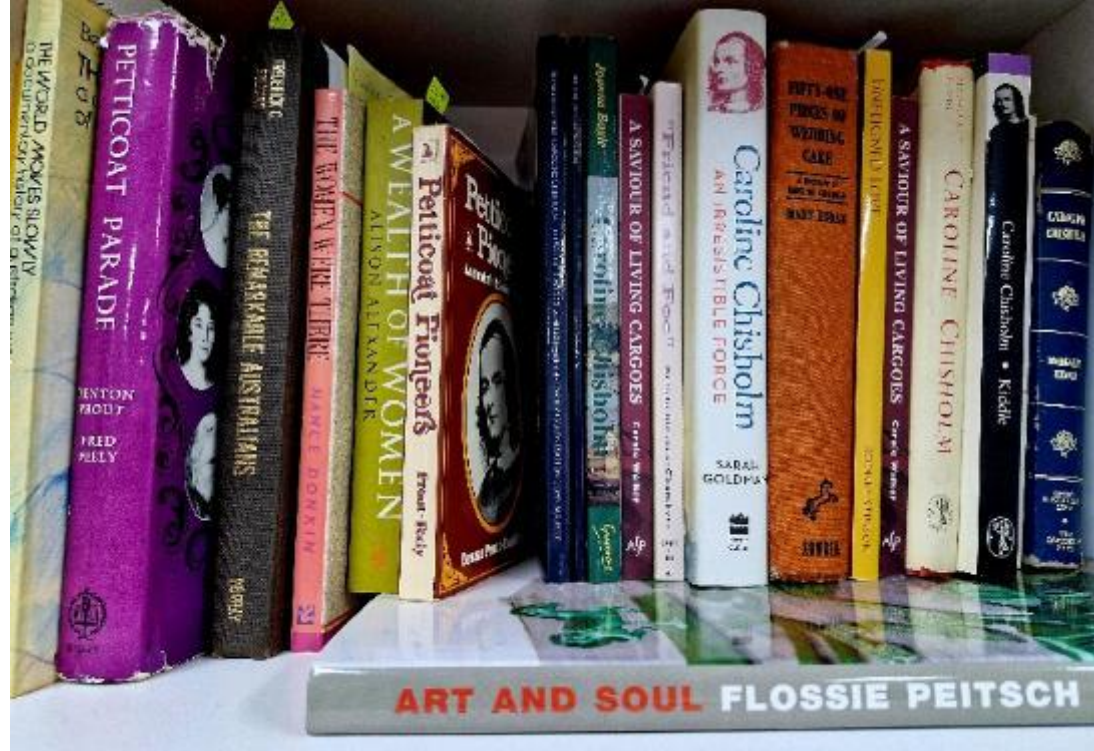
June 27th – October 11th 2026

***Thanking the fans of FLO_ART, some of whom have
faithfully followed Flossie for over 50 years.***

***Special thanks to those in the
'Flash Mob' activity at the Opening!***

Photography by T & f Peitsch, and Unknowns

****NOTE:** The catalogue for RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED is solely self-funded by the artist. Despite submitting an arduous application with glowing support letters, I have not attracted any grants from the Australian Government's Arts and Cultural Development Program, Regional Arts Australia or Regional Arts Victoria or by any Goldfields Shire Council funding.



This fine art exhibition is dedicated to Caroline Chisholm, 1808 -1877.

I often talk to CC and consider how she would have managed a situation.

Dr. Flossie Peitsch, a feminist, Creative PhD candidate, Federation University and a PhD from Victoria University and MFA, BFA(HONS) from Monash University, Melbourne, is an internationally exhibiting multimedia, performance art, and installation artist residing near Melbourne. A cross-disciplinary artist, community liaison, academic and art educator, Peitsch is a 'visual art' theologian with interests in social sculpture, generating creative communities through the arts and contemporary spirituality facilitating the self-realization of being – termed one's SPLACE.



CAROLINE CHISHOLM 8

Mat weaver Hildegard Stumpf

53cmW x 160cmL x 1cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (pink mat) 2026
Vintage ragged rug, fibre,
haberdashery



CONTESTED TERRAIN

What does it mean to have recourse to materiality, since it is clear from the start that matter has a history (indeed, more than one) and that the history of matter is in part determined by the negotiation of sexual difference.¹ Judith Butler

Flossie Peitsch is an artist whose practice is shaped by lived experience and a sustained interrogation of how embodied gendered norms are produced, regulated, and unequally distributed across social production. A persistent thread throughout her oeuvre is the interrogation of the gendered demarcation of private and public space as a porous and contested terrain where norms are enforced, resisted, and reconfigured.

Flossie's most enduring conceptual strategy, and a defining marker of her practice, is the elevation and reframing of commonplace materials to challenge entrenched societal attitudes to women's voices and bodies. In her work, she provokes a spatial unravelling of limiting binaries, reframing craft traditions and materials historically associated with the hidden and societally undervalued voices and labour of women.

Flossie's work has long been underpinned by autobiography, with honesty and openness sometimes extending to diarism and affective moments of catharsis. She draws on her own lived experience, shaped by many years negotiating motherhood alongside a deep engagement with faith and community through pastoral ministry, as her arts practice steadily took form. In recent years, however, her practice has shifted focus towards an exploration of the lives and creativity of historical women.

In introducing this new thematic thread to her practice, Flossie presented the relational installation *APRONSTRINGS* at the Eureka Centre, 2024. Located adjacent to the famous Eureka Flag, a profound symbol of resistance, the installation honoured the three women believed to have sewn the flag. *APRONSTRINGS* invited audiences to name and celebrate unsung historical women alongside women of today, both publicly recognised and those quietly sustaining community and care.

Flossie's current exhibition at the Central Goldfields Art Gallery in Maryborough, in the heart of the Victorian Goldfields, turns to one of the most

significant yet often misunderstood women of colonial Australia, Caroline Chisholm. This emerging body of work, of which the exhibition offers an early iteration, will underpin her second Visual Arts PhD, undertaken through Federation University. It aligns with and extends the signature material, spatial, and conceptual strategies that distinguish her practice, building a powerful



¹ Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993, page 29.

dialogue across her oeuvre between the personal and the public.

Flossie has delved deeply into the life of Caroline Chisholm, an ineffable historical figure whose signification of womanhood has long been shaped by Victorian moral frameworks of maternalism, philanthropy, and respectability, and by the class structures within which those ideals were enacted. Through this body of work, she seeks to reclaim Caroline Chisholm's agency and to embrace her spirit as a provocation for our times. As she writes: 'Caroline Chisholm is a superwoman in this regard. She is my muse for humanitarian intervention. My art is derivative of her life, an ode to her in my visual conceptual language.'²

A recurring strategy employed by Flossie in her practice is the building of dialogue between soft and hard materials, and between the handmade and found or repurposed objects. A palpable sense of yearning is expressed through these materials, with their embedded and layered histories, provoking a desire for close, embodied engagement. These material strategies bridge past and future, conflating the travails of historical women with those of contemporary women.

In *CAROLINE CHISHOLM 10*³ (2026) there is a heightened dialogue between the softness of textiles and the fixed, unyielding structure of a cot once used by her own children. This material interplay acts as a metaphor for the tension between human liberty and social architecture. The cot speaks both of childhood social conditioning and of maternal care and gendered familial responsibility. Yet in this configuration the cot also resembles a tapestry loom. This reconfiguration unsettles entrenched binaries between domestic textile practices and male dominated industrial production. In an act of bricolage, Flossie reframes the significance of the cot, foregrounding its embedded histories while threading new layers of meaning through a transformative process of weaving.

In a larger immersive installation titled *CAROLINE CHISHOLM 14* (2026), sixteen processional poles and stands form a structural framework. Typically used in religious ceremonies, these elements elevate the work into a mode associated with public ritual. Attached to this structure are pillowcases stripped of their domestic function and reconfigured as animated quilted flags, their deflated forms activating the space through scale,

colour, and movement. Adapting the participatory strategy used in *APRONSTRINGS*, visitors are invited to attach luggage tags bearing the handwritten names of women of significance to them. This device serves as a metaphor for collective action, staging a quiet but insistent process of social recognition and change.

Textile wall works dominate this exhibition, and among them is a work layered with deep personal associations for the artist. 'Caroline Chisholm 8' transforms a pink rag rug woven more than fifty years ago by the artist's mother. Long used within the family home, the rug carried the quiet imprint of domestic life until age and wear rendered it fragile. In this work, the rug has been structurally reinforced and reworked through the addition of curtain stiffening, a material the artist once used while making curtains for her young children. Here, 'Caroline Chisholm 8' establishes a site where generational intimacy and experience are expressed yet tenuously held.

CAROLINE CHISHOLM 8 (2026) is a gestural evocation of the cyclical nature of care and the rhythms of maternal time. Flossie writes: 'The white strips remind me of the corsetry my Mum wore. The dangling yarn seems visceral and fleshy, showing the bleed many mothers experience as monthly cycles mark the passing of time.'⁴ The artist's transformation of the rug into art is both a recuperation and a deconstruction. In the reworking of the revered heirloom, nurture and care collide with discard and defilement. Symbolically, the work speaks to the pragmatism embedded within cultures of women, and to the need to change, adapt, and reform ways of being, both physically and ontologically.

Flossie's emphasis on materiality, tactility, and spatial relationships posits gender not as a fixed condition, but as something repeatedly formed and reformed. Visually immersive and insistently haptic, her works employ relational strategies to solicit a bodily encounter that confronts detached spectatorship, creating interpretive slippage that challenges essentialist notions of identity. Through the merging of the familiar and the uncanny, she draws viewers into an intimate dialogue and, in some cases, a confrontation, with the structures of care, containment, and resistance that shape our gendered experiences.

Anthony Camm⁵

May 2026

² Email: Flossie Peitsch to Anthony Camm, 06/08/2024

³ *CAROLINE CHISHOLM 10*, 72cmW x 170cmL x 3cmD, ASSEMBLAGE (12 tapestries on pink rag mat) 2026 Tapestry weaving, vintage rug

⁴ Email: Anthony Camm to Anthony White, 06/05/2026

⁵ Anthony Camm: Manager of the Eureka Centre, Eureka Stockade, home to the Eureka Flag; 2007 to 2018, Director of Ararat Gallery TAMA, Australia's most comprehensive collection of post-1970s textile art; Research includes visual arts, textile practice, Australian cultural history; Published in many journals / exhibition catalogues.

FGP'S SKETCH OF CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY'S R_T_FL_LAYOUT

Dr Flossie Peitsch in her studio, Maryborough, VIC, Australia



My Affinity
with
Caroline
Chisholm

Almost everything I have accomplished in my life has almost killed me. Not the least of which was childbirth. To live life as I have, I have needed to be an overachiever. An *overachiever* may not be a popular person - especially if she is a woman. As such, I developed a girl crush on Caroline Chisholm who persistently made the most of her place in the world.

Her story of 'overachievement' is not to be missed. Her humanitarian life of selfless service deserves close reinspection. But today, alas, it is all but missing in the story of the Victorian goldfields. Using a second PhD in my 72-year history and with art as the vehicle, I hope to once again place Caroline Chisholm centre-stage in the Australian goldfields' history.

CAROLINE CHISHOLM 1

330cm W X 165cmL x 0.5cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (red runner) 2026
Recycled / new materials, textile off cuts

A worn out woollen electric blanket scrap
and a 2nd hand table runner.

Both have weight and memory.

Analogously, CC provided
safe lodging for travellers
to the Victorian goldfields.





CAROLINE CHISHOLM 3

41CMw X 172cmL x 0.5cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (burgundy runner) 2026
New block-printed material from India, textile off cuts,
haberdashery

Unfinished? Not a problem.
The viewer completes the pattern and so,
participates in designing this 'wall runner'.

CAROLINE CHISHOLM 2

450cmW x 176cmL x 0.5cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (teal runner) 2026
New block-printed material from India,
textile off-cuts, haberdashery

Flossie Peitsch, 72, says, 'I challenge myself by raising the creative bar ever higher - for over 50+ years. Sometimes, it is almost out of sight, but I haven't *outdone* myself yet! There is still lots of *'doing'* to explore.





CAROLINE CHISHOLM 5

52cmW x 170cmL x 1.0cmD

ASSEMBLAGE (flour bags)

Found objects, embroidered pieces

Have you ever wondered what happens to unfinished craftwork? Does it lie forever wasting away - neglected in some Opshop? Not if Flossie finds it! Dr Flossie Peitsch, a Maryborough local, reclaims those handwork foundlings and transforms them into fine art. Her self-set task is to alter the textiles as little intervention as possible when making her fibre art treasures.

Peitsch ponders over discarded materials, then cuts, curls, adds buttons, braid, and other oddments, allowing the art to emerge in its own way. Creatives understand this process. Everyone else may need to be convinced. The outcome is funky, fantastic though formidable, fun. Come and see *RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED* for yourself.

CAROLINE CHISHOLM 7

58cm x 137cmL x 1cmD

ASSEMBLAGE (Patience) 2026

Quilted panels, beading, found textiles

**Quilted wall hanging by
Patience Peitsch**

There is nothing like
caring for a baby to
bring your life
into focus.





CAROLINE
CHISHOLM
15

6 panels x
(30cmW x
60cmL x 6cmD
2/6 panels
shown

ASSEMBLAGE
(white strips)
2026
Textile on
canvas

Ragged bits
of cotton
blanketry
from the
Lobethal Mill
(Lobethal, SA)
show that
there is
attraction in
the simplest
arrangement.





CAROLINE CHISHOLM 9

67cm x 165cm x 1cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (gold mat) 2026
 Vintage ragged mat, recycled textile

Sometimes the material itself dictates its own approach to deconstruction. My being divvied up, like my dress, in differing family roles is suggested in this wall installation.





CAROLINE CHISHOLM 4

46cmW x 203cmL x 1.0cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (white drawer lining) 2026
Reclaimed knitted squares, hardware

What path to follow?

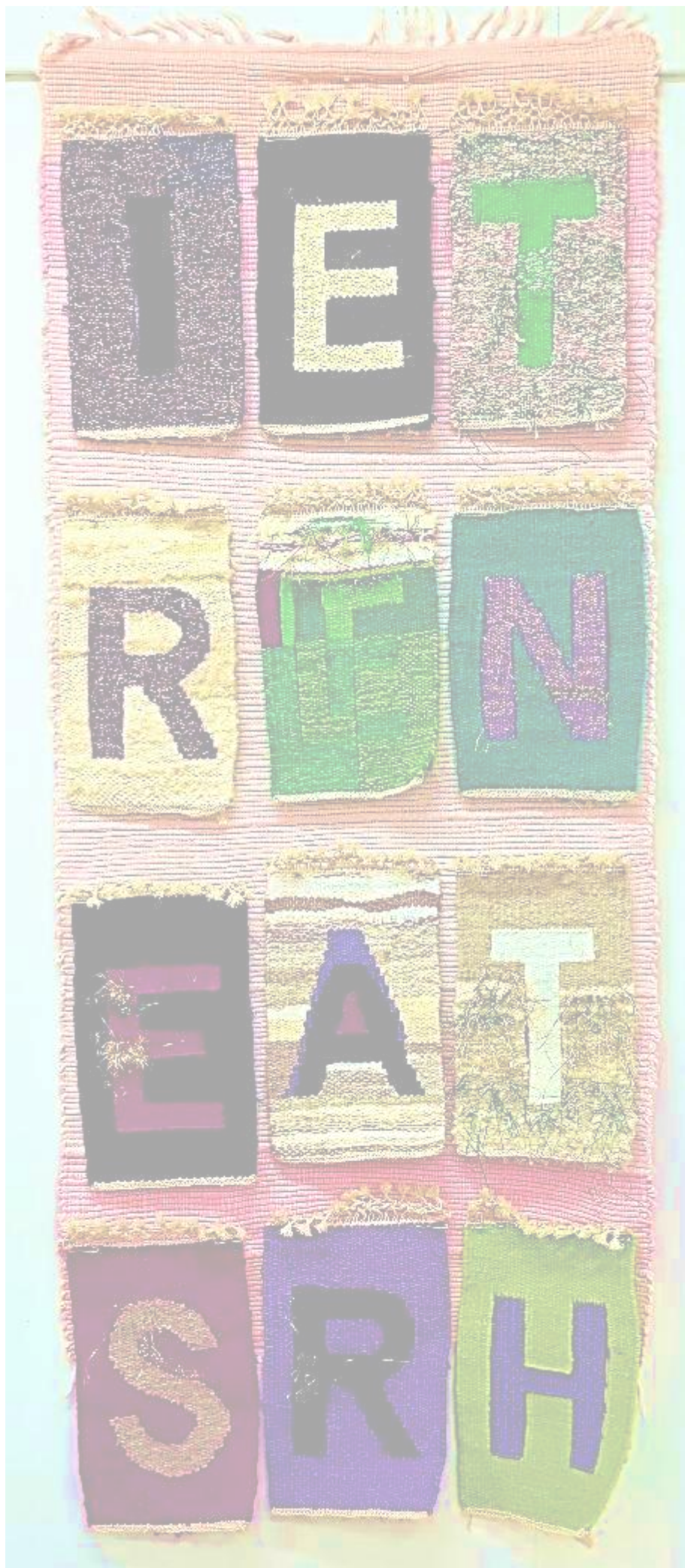
It the right one a footprint in the snow?



Caroline Chisholm 11
REINSTATE HER

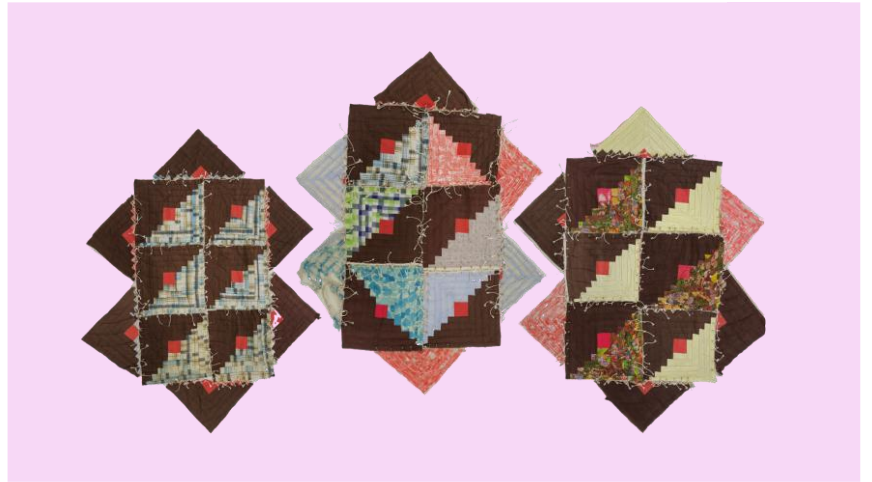
72cmW x 170cmL x 3cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (12 tapestries on
pink rag mat) 2026
Tapestry weavings, vintage rug

A dusting of illusive gold but
mostly only the space between.





SPLACE



CAROLINE CHISHOLM 16

5 panels x (700cmW x 900cmL x 0.3cmD)
ASSEMBLAGE
(CRUMPLEDQUILTSKINS) 2024
Vintage textiles, safety pins, cotton fibre

(Opposite)

CAROLINE CHISHOLM 16

Master Tapestry Weaver
Featuring green landscapes
Rachel Frecker

(Variable) 113cmW x 133cmL x 4cmD
ASSEMBLAGE (gathered handcraft) 2026
Cot blanket, various textiles





CAROLINE CHISHOLM 12 (detail)
300cmW x 300cmL x 200cmH
ASSEMBLAGE (ragged textile lengths) 2026
Steel frame, material, vertical blind strips



Caroline Chisholm 14

Master Quilter

Joy Fox

Fly the feminist colours, green, purple and white!

(Variable) Handwoven Textiles individually mounted on 200cmH steel standards with stands x 16

ASSEMBLAGE (pillowcases) 2026

Quilted blocks, recycled linen, processional standards, parcel tags

(over next three pages)

32 Quilt Patches on 16 repurposed pillowcases

Below: Flossie's onsite sketch of a modern green mosaic, India and a stylized elephant sketch - this enduring design is handcrafted in specific regions of India.











CAROLINE CHISHOLM
13

(detail)

50cmW x 200cmL x 200cmH
ASSEMBLAGE (blue aprons)
2026

Steel shelving, textile aprons,
parcel tags, jute



IRONAPRONS



Maureen Ryan
Professor Emeritus, Victoria University

TEXT, TEXTILE, AND CONTEXTURE

I remember sitting in my office at Victoria University in Footscray one afternoon in 2004 when Flossie Peitsch and I first talked about Caroline Chisholm. We had read a recent article by Murphy (2004) in the local newspaper, *The Moonee Valley Leader* about the Radical in Bonnet and Shawl. In this, Murphy drew on the collection of four Caroline Chisholm essays by John Moran (1991). Located as we were in Melbourne's western suburbs, near the starting point for diggers heading further west to make their fortunes in the 1850s, we talked about the tentlike structures referred to as "shelter sheds" or "shakedown". Caroline Chisholm had cajoled the government to build ten protection sites to safely accommodate travellers along the way. Little did we know then that Flossie would - in a few years - create an exhibition of such structures in the grounds of the Living Museum of the West⁶

Identifying strongly with Caroline Chisholm as both a mother of six children and an immigrant like herself, Flossie went on to conduct several exhibitions which drew together both her own and the experiences of Caroline Chisholm⁷ I remember one as part of Gallery Sunshine Everywhere (a children's gallery I established and ran for many years) where aprons created in communal workshops were displayed on a clothesline carousel form. Each apron recorded aspects of Caroline Chisholm's endeavours, carried the key theme of family and domesticity and fluttered unfettered in the gentle breeze. As in all this intertwined creative activity, there was always a solid family and community base.

Preparing this essay in 2026 has taken me back to reviewing the life of Caroline Chisholm. In doing this I was interested to find myself drawn especially to references to her call for a 'humane system of immigration'. She wrote this in letters to *The Morning Chronicle* in London in 1849/1850. Demonstrating her equanimity, she wrote that '*the good of the whole is my object*'.

In 1867, she wrote in a letter to the *Melbourne Argus* highlighting especially the plight of Chinese immigrants in Kyneton in Victoria where she retired. 'There will be no rest until man is recognised as man, without distinction of colour or clime'. This influence is depicted in CAROLINE CHISHOLM 8.⁸

⁶ http://exhibitions.flossiepeitsch.com/chisholms_homes/chisholms/index.html

⁷ <http://www.livingmuseum.org.au/chisholms%20homes/community/letteredaprons.html>.

⁸ 45cmW x 200cmL x 1.0cmD, ASSEMBLAGE (red/gold bamboo) 2026, Recycled / new materials, textile off cuts, haberdashery

Chisholm's experiences as a young bride living in India contributed to her developing identity as the 'em/immigrants' friend'. This was further shaped by her religious commitment and having been both part of a large family of origin and having created a large family herself. Here to, Flossie has followed a similar path as Chisholm - even to including a 2026 textile trek to Kosuth, India. While much of Caroline's work was largely domestic in intent, her plans were more extensive.

Raising funds for more women to emigrate to 'Australia' with a view to increasing family numbers in the colony's goldfields and providing shelters to enable women and children to travel to the goldfields were domestic endeavours. Writing in the London Chronicle about immigration as a means of building colonies and alleviating poverty in emigrants' home countries, she emphasised the importance of choice in emigration and the necessity for preparedness for acceptance of immigrants. She truly was both the 'emigrants' friend' and the 'immigrants' friend'.

Since 1974 when she left Canada where she was born and grew up with her parents and sisters in a religious home, Flossie has lived in many parts of Australia - urban, regional and rural. In so many different places she had felt and reviewed the immigrant experience of relocation, community building and connectedness. Chisholm had similar experiences and both women focussed beyond their experiences to document and interrogate those experiences. Still a product of British imperialism, Chisholm has been criticised as seeking to create British domestic structures and values in the colonies. However, she strongly advocated for Aboriginal communities in audience with Queen Victoria. There is also some reference in her writing about the poor treatment of Indigenous women by white settlers. Flossie's recent journey has included four years living and working with Torres Strait Islanders and aboriginal communities in most states in Australia. A greater, albeit still limited, understanding of Australian history is slowly emerging.

This exhibition has the title *Ragged and Tagged and Flagged: Caroline Chisholm, Domesticity and the Victorian Goldfields*. For me when I contemplate how it draws together Flossie Peitsch and Caroline Chisholm, it is related words like text, textile and texture that come to mind. We know Caroline Chisholm through her writing, those lengthy letters and brochures she wrote and distributed far and wide as well as through her active contributions to nineteenth century Australia. We know Flossie Peitsch through her extensive catalogue of visual art, using textures and textiles so often to create, amuse, question and provoke. Further, the use of panels in this exhibition places the work in an historical and a religious framework that links the two women. As well, a variety of textures and techniques are employed reflecting the artist's domestic and diverse experiences.

Importantly too, this absorbing series of art installations tells stories and carries meaning, more akin to text in ways that single art objects and narrative may be unable to do. This offers us much to read and contemplate.

Maureen Ryan, April 2026.

References

Chisholm, Caroline (1849/50) Letters to The Morning Chronicle, London, December 12, 1849, December 18, 1849, December 31, 1849, January 5, 1850

Chisholm, Caroline (1867) Letter to Melbourne Argus, June 9th.

Moran, J (1991) Radical in Bonnet and Shawl: four political lectures by Caroline Chisholm: introduction, editing and commentary by John Moran

Murphy, T (2004) Radical in Bonnet and Shawl. Moonee Valley Leader, March 15



TOM TOM is our old Mazda's GPS system. It is not updateable, so, is obsolete on many days. Likewise, rituals, no matter how largely writ, change over time. Beware of becoming similarly obsolete in your own time.

TOMASE is my husband of over fifty years. His backing of my art practice is legendary. This is the first installation definitively dedicated to him.



CAROLINE CHISHOLM 18

3/6 panels pictured

6 x (154cmW x 139cmL x 0.30cmD)
ASSEMBLAGE (commercial tapestries)

2026

Black Netting, longer version spells
TOMASE

FABRICATING THE GOLDFIELDS

We are incredibly fortunate to have an artist of Flossie's calibre in our community of Maryborough. It is my experience that her art is accomplished and deeply personal - yet universal in sentiment. It is such a joy to hear Flossie's art talks which offer insightful access into her creative process. Her passion invested in art is palpable. *RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED (R_T_FL)* fabricates the Victorian goldfields for reflection today.

RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED holds special significance for me. This is the second time I've been invited to contribute to one of Flossie's exhibitions. The first was during my time as Mayor of the Central Goldfields Shire, when I had the honour of launching her exhibition *FEARLESS, 2024*. My personal connection with Flossie is through our shared membership in the local Bushwalking Club.

The Victorian Goldfields played a transformative role in shaping Australia's history during the mid-19th century. Following the discovery of gold in the 1850s, towns such as Maryborough, Ballarat and Bendigo rapidly expanded as tens of thousands of prospectors arrived from around the world.

This influx brought not only economic growth but also cultural diversity, social tension, and significant political change, including movements for miners' rights like the Eureka Stockade. The Goldfields Era left a decisive legacy in Victoria's architecture, population distribution, and identity.

Historically and globally associated with hospitality and domestic bliss fashioned by women, quilts, waggas, coverlets, tapestries, cross stitch and most needlework have served as storytelling mediums. They convey personal histories, cultural traditions, and community values.

The tactile nature of handwork augments depth and warmth, making history feel tangible and immediate. Precious linens spirited from the old country and log-cabin quilts pieced from discarded cloth on the goldfields humanized tents densely dotting the dusty hills. They were welcoming, comforting, nostalgic. Yet, this is not the full story.

RAGGED & TAGGED & FLAGGED likewise fabricates desperate human vignettes. Of families adapting to new lives, cultural assimilation, physical hardship in inhospitable terrain, the despair of infant deaths, accidents and loss of home. There was a frantic, desperate energy in the diggings which was nearly unsurvivable - the elation of striking gold, the challenge of multicultural skirmish, the agony of ruin.

Flossie has created work that both delights and unsettles. These resolved installations not only honour a defining era in Australian history but also highlight the enduring power art plays in connecting people with the past in meaningful ways. Her skill and creativity transform simple textiles into rich, textured conceptual constructs that allude to the home grown but nonetheless harsh realities of

being diggers, male or female, on the Victorian Goldfields.

As we explore this new exhibition, let us take a moment to appreciate the painstaking process behind each work. The artistry involved in designing and collating fibre-based art is complex and meditative. It requires patience, skill, and a deep sensitivity to colour, balance, texture, and pattern. The results are not just attractive pieces of art, but threaded reflections, a lasting interpretation of the Victorian Goldfields. *R_T_FL* encourages us to look closer, to visualize the stories embedded in their design.

I extend my sincere thanks to Flossie for sharing her incredible talent with us. Her dedication and passion are evident in every piece, and I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to enjoy her work through this exhibition.

I encourage you to suspend enlightened reasoning and blithely step into the colour, the aura, the textures, to participate in the imagined stories woven and stitched into each piece. May this exhibition not only be a feast for the eyes, but also a source of reflection and contemplation of the past - the legacy of The Victorian Goldfields.

L Long: Farmer, Authorized Celebrant at 'Love Stories by Liesbeth', Adventurer, Environmental Enthusiast, Councillor and former Mayor of Central Goldfields Shire, Founding President of Central Goldfields Bushwalking & Hiking Club Inc

Rug Hooking. 1800s handwork

This was a common way to recycle worn out clothes in the 1800s. Garments, ragged into thin strips, were pulled evenly through old burlap bags with a strong, large hook. Designs were often simple repeated patterns, but advanced crafts women could add dates, words and figurative shapes as the contemporary one pictured below, a gift to my cousin Janet. Usually only unused mats survived.

These are found in museums as examples of this natty process.





Flossie learning
hand sewing skills
at RaasLeela
100%HandStitched
@raasleelatextile
www.raasleela.co.in

RRP \$20

