

MANDALAS SYMBOLS OF HARMONY AND PEACE

by Sandra Joran

To me mandalas are symbols of harmony and peace. They represent beauty in the world, stillness and calm. Their centre radiates out to a circumference and outer circle that has no beginning or end, a wholeness, a completeness. I started painting mandalas seriously in 1999.

In the year of 1967 I received the first acknowledgement that I was a budding artist". I won a prize at High School for a completed and painted design for a rather stylish bookmark. I was thrilled, and for my prize, I was escorted to the school library to choose my prize of a book to my liking. I chose a little book on Picasso, which I loved and read and looked through many times.

I left school and did training at East Sydney Technical College, Australia, to become a draftsman. I studied electrical and mechanical drafting. After completing my course I worked with manufacturing and consulting engineers in Sydney, Australia, for about ten years.

In between times I finished a Commercial Art Diploma with the Art Training Institute in Victoria, Australia. Also at that time I had started painting and selling my black and white graphic abstract portraits. And colourful mixed media paintings on paper and board.

1980 brought the discovery of wool and fibre as art mediums, I began making large fibre wall hangings. I enrolled in a 6 year off campus Arts – Tapestry Diploma Course with Warrnambool TAFE in Victoria, Australia. I wove large tapestries with colourful designs but also focused a lot on Navajo Indian designs and colours. This continued for many years as I loved weaving but I was suffering from bad RSI in my shoulder, and in the end I had to stop.

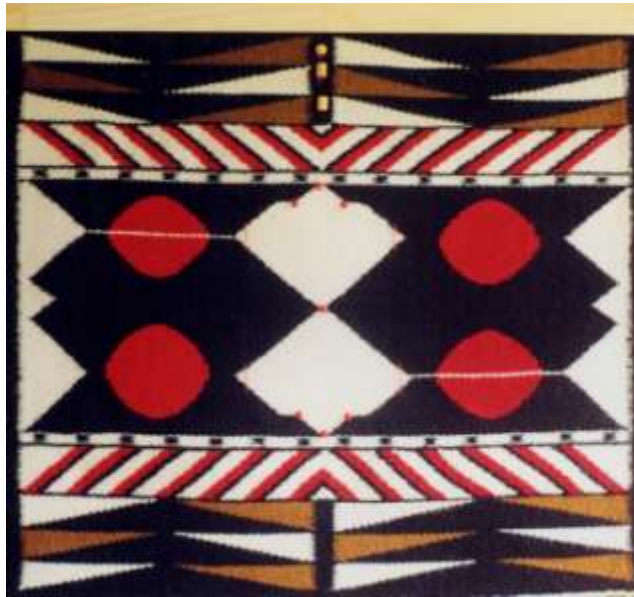


Fig1. Navajo Hand-woven Tapestry

But everything has a reason right? So after many, many months of contemplation about wanting to continue to be a creative artist which had now been my way of life since leaving school, I was looking for something that could replace my weaving with less physical needs but hold my interest as much. I started reading about mandalas.

Mandalas are sacred symbols of the universe and after reading about them I felt a great affinity towards them. Their symbolism was extremely interesting to me and what they stood for. I unpacked all me beloved drafting equipment that I had stored away many years ago. And with much enthusiasm and delight started on my new art journey. That is fifteen years ago now and I have painted near on 200 mandalas since that day!



Fig.2 Sacred Balance Mandala

I draw them out first in pencil on canvas or paper using my “ancient” hand drafting tools, measuring it all up correctly, getting everything symmetrical and the correct degrees. No computer is ever used or has anything to do with my mandalas, they only come from me. I then paint in the larger main colours and then proceed with my layers of colour and the intricate designs start to show up in front of my eyes, like magic! I start to paint these with metallic paints and inks in gold etc.



Fig. 3 Into The Mystic Mandala

I continue painting until I feel the work is complete, which can be a very, very long time and many hours work. But when I'm painting I'm not consciously aware of the time going by, as it appears to become a meditative process and I'm lost in the mandala being created. Is this is the journey to the centre? Namaste.

Bio:

Sandra Joran is an Australian artist and tapestry weaver, but has specialised in painting mandalas for the last fourteen years. She is an avid reader of poetry and books on all topics and the occasional writer. She has studied many art forms over the years, but always returns to the fascination of geometrical and mathematical based art forms. Her background is based in mechanical ~ electrical drafting. She works and paints with mixed media on canvas or watercolour paper using the old hand operated 'antique' drafting equipment from her early drafting days. Her art works are published in books and held in private collections around the world. www.mandalasaustralia.com