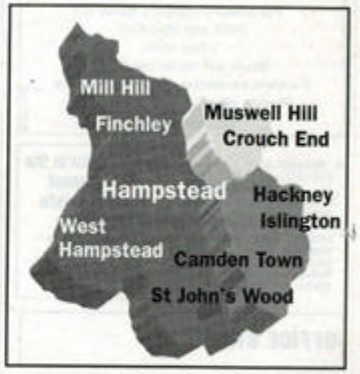
ADVERTISING FEATURE

LONDON'S PREMIER RECRUITMENT GUIDE

Lifestyle satisfaction or high earnings: what's your choice?



Former teacher Polly Leonard used her knowledge of textiles to launch the new magazine, Selvedge

YOUR money or your life? It seems people are increasingly reluctant to make it an either/or choice. Female self-employed entrepreneurs have emerged as the driving force in the crafts sector.

As a Crafts Council report, Making it in the 21st Century, points out, these new businesses demonstrate a commitment, entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to a personal passion despite comparatively low financial reward. They also highlight the importance of lifestyle satisfaction over high earnings.

It's familiar reading for Polly Leonard, editor of a new textile/lifestyle magazine, Selvedge.

Textiles have been her passion since training at The Glasgow School of Art and they are her raison d'être.

After two years spent editing and relaunching Embroidery magazine she decided textiles deserved to be seen in a wider context.

Despite terrifying statistics on the survival rate of new magazines, she decided to create her own publication dedicated to the subject.

There is a philosophy behind Selvedge, a belief system based on a cerebral and sensual addiction to all textiles.

The magazine is part of an overall renaissance of the handmade and crafted.

Evidence of making is desirable and this work intensive aesthetic is exactly what Selvedge offers.

As one Paris-based trend forecaster recently pointed out: "Many people are saying that they actually want fewer things and that they have to be special."

Selvedge is dedicated to this idea covering textiles made with time, care, thought and skill in a magazine produced in exactly the same way.

Polly launched Selvedge independently because she longed for a publication that covered textiles in every form.

Before venturing into editing her background was as an artist and teacher.

Polly taught at Channing and South Hampstead schools before becoming head of art at Northbridge House.

While practising as an artist, she produced what could be described as minimalist sculpture using techniques derived from basket making.

Hand skills are still closest to her heart but she notes: "My delight in this area is only a starting point. The boundaries of my curiosity extend far beyond fine art and into fashion, feminism, travel, history and ethnography."

Her passion has become the driving force behind a small but dynamic company based in her home in Highgate.

With two children under five and a partner who teaches full time at Christ the King primary school in Tollington Park, producing the sample issue has been challenging.

"We are a tiny organisation with a small but highly dedicated team.

"We have already outgrown our 'office' and our next employee might have to work on the stairs!" says Polly.

It's a hectic but productive atmosphere with the majority of the staff performing the usual juggling act of childcare and work.

But Polly prides herself on being a family-friendly employer and in times of crisis staff have the option of bringing the children to work.

And it's been worth the long days and late nights. Polly's love of textiles and her desire to promote them internationally has translated into a new publication that is determined to cover every facet of fine textiles in an intelligent, stylish and contemporary way.

As Polly says: "Textiles are among the first and last things we experience as human beings: they cover us from cradle to grave. Selvedge aims to cover everything in between."

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