

UK Reef e-Newsletter Edition 02

Reef News

The UK Reef has been growing and growing over the past few weeks. Thank you to those of you who have been keeping us updated on what you are making. There is some brilliant work going on – so please keep it up. While we in the UK have been crocheting away, Margaret and Christine Wertheim (originators of the Reef, from the Institute For Figuring in Los Angeles) have been working hard installing their New York exhibition. The show opened on Sunday April 6th.



“The New York exhibition is installed across two sites. Left is the installation in the Broadway Windows. The exhibition here is minimal and elegant, and befitting the location, extremely graceful...

On the right is a shot from the World Financial Centre, Winter Garden site, which hails from the other end of the aesthetic spectrum - positively teeming with wild, woolly, untamed, female energy (plus the input of a couple of fine blokes)”
Margaret Wertheim



The New York Reef (the New York equivalent of our own UK Reef) is displayed in the World Financial Centre exhibition. The New York Reef was spearheaded by the New York Crochet Guild and the Harlem Knitting Circle.

Tips and techniques

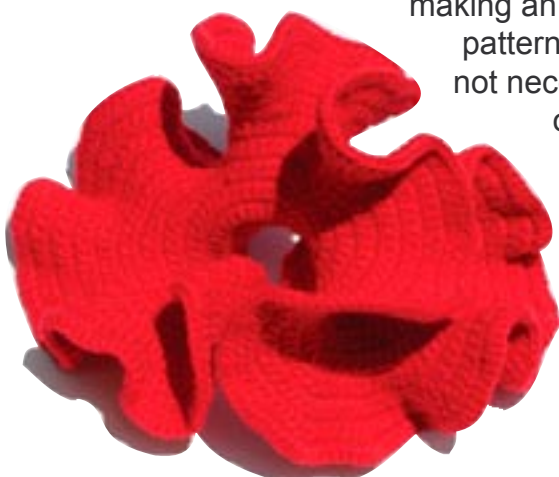
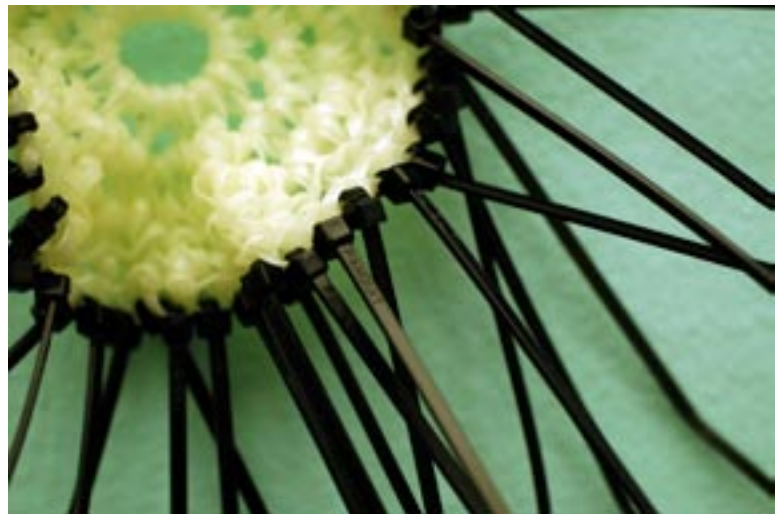
Thanks to Katy Bevan, freelance craft writer and Participation Manager at the Crafts Council for these tips and techniques:

Which shape?

The starting point of the curly kelp is the hyperbolic plane. This starts as a crocheted chain and increases regularly. The two-sided plane is a variation, where stitches are worked all the way around the original line, creating a sort of oval. The anemone, or pseudosphere, starts with a circle, either a crochet chain joined with a slip stitch, or a magic loop so that there isn't a hole. Regular increases multiply the space so that it ruffles and frills. Tubular structures are useful to support the smaller pieces of coral, giving them height.

Material matters

People have come up with some amazingly creative ideas to make their crocheted coral. Some have been using plastic carrier bags, others have found that the plastic wrappers that come around magazines and much junk mail, is stretchy and more forgiving on the fingers. Some bags have boldly-coloured logos, and when cut up they can create interesting patterns at intervals, much like space-dyed yarn. I've even heard from someone who is using those little nets that fruit and veg come wrapped in. We can't wait to see what else people have come up with.



Keep going round and round

If you have never heard of a turning chain, don't panic, you don't need to know. Those of you who are seasoned hookers will be used to making an elevating chain at the end of each round. This is fantastic in patterns where you need to keep the stripes straight. However, it is not necessary to use one in your coral crocheting. In fact, since lots of shells and sea creatures have a spiral structure, using the basic spiral technique where you just keep on going round and round is perfect.

Diary Dates

Reef contributions deadline

The deadline for postal contributions, and the day to bring your contributions to us at the Southbank Centre is looming! On **May 6th** come to the Violet Room in Spirit Level, Royal Festival Hall with your Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef forms between **2pm and 8pm**.

We hope that the Reef will continue to grow beyond this date, but this is the deadline to get your name on the exhibition panel.

River Thames, Isle of Dogs

Having consulted the tidal charts and our friends at environmental charity Thames 21 we have set a date to recover plastic bags from the Isle of Dogs. There is a growing plastic element to the Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef, highlighting the environmental problems that plastic can cause.

We are calling for volunteers to join us at the **Isle of Dogs** in London on **May 10th at 10am** to pull plastic bags from the foreshore. With the help of Thames 21 some of these bags will be washed and disinfected, and can then be used to crochet part of the UK Reef.

If you are willing to don your wellies, do your bit for the environment and crochet an extra special part of the UK Reef, then email us at:

ukreef@southbankcentre.co.uk and we'll send you further details about where to meet, etc. Any contributions made from bags recovered from the Isle of Dogs can be accepted up to two weeks after the deadline for all other contributions.



Margeret collecting plastic bags during her trip to London in March



Foreshore at the Isle of Dogs

How to contribute

The first step to contributing to the UK Hyperbolic Crochet Reef is learning about the Hyperbolic Crochet technique. You can discover more on the IFF website: www.theiff.org

Getting started on your own hyperbolic models is easy. The basic insight is to understand that these forms result from the simple process of increasing the number of stitches in every row. The more often you increase stitches the faster the model will grow and the more crenellated the finished form will be. Models can begin with a simple line, resulting in a hyperbolic plane; or from a single point with the crochet spiraling around to gradually fan out like a cone, resulting in what is known as a pseudosphere. You may also begin from a circle, which will produce a tubular, bell shaped, or trumpeted configuration. Once you start to experiment, the variety is endless. We recommend that beginners read the IFF's online exhibit on Hyperbolic Space and study the introductory gallery for helpful tips.

As you explore, be playful – don't worry about sticking too closely to the formal rules. Try things out for fun. Experiment with different types of yarn. Try mixing yarns together, say a thick worsted and a fine mohair. Try varying the rate of increase in a single model. Consider using string, plastic and wire or anything else that takes your fancy. Try felting – throw the finished model in a washing machine with really hot water and let it churn for half an hour. This only works with pure wool (acrylics and cotton will not felt) but the results are wild!

For details on how to send us your completed work see the attached UK Reef Contribution Form. You can now also drop off your completed work at *I Knit London* during their opening hours. *I Knit London* are at 106 Lower Marsh, Waterloo, SE1 7AB. See www.iknit.org.uk

Send us your news

Keep us posted on how your reef forms are developing. We can feature photographs in the newsletter, and will share any special techniques you have discovered.

Contact the UK reef organisers by email at: ukreef@southbankcentre.co.uk

