

Indigo's gone blue world



*The story of indigo's influence on textiles and clothing down through the ages shows what a remarkable plant it has been in human history. Last years **A Blue to Dye for** exhibition brought this rich tapestry of influence to life, showcasing the story from ancient cloth right up to the latest fashion brands*

Brighton, the city immediately south of London, where land meets English Channel, is known as a hip, funky kind of joint. Thousands of young people head to the South Coast for its party, bohemian reputation and left field atmosphere, many from all over Europe. Sometimes described (wrongly, I think) as the UK's San Francisco, a recent convert is Frank Gehry, who, wooed by the local council, was, until it fell victim to the credit crunch, building his first large scale UK project along the promenade sea front. With his liking for using clothing, its forms and folds, as inspirational props when discussing some of his projects, some of the city's denizens may wonder whether Gehry had noticed that Brighton also has a vibrant craft and designer-maker scene, and its University has one of the best 3D design courses – including textiles – in the country.

As an almost invisible support backdrop to the city's bubbling 'making' creativity, Brighton Art Gallery has been host to a long list of inspiring exhibitions, the leit-motif of which might be the new, or at least, fuzzy terrain between craft and art practice. One recent example, *Indigo, A Blue to Dye for*, although now over a year old, showcases how an ancient craft can completely succeed in today's interconnected 24/7 global

