

**Short bio:**

Jenny Balfour-Paul, Honorary Research Fellow at Exeter University, UK, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, lecturer and freelance exhibition curator, is author of two books on Indigo. Currently researching dyes in shipwrecks, completing a book about a Victorian traveller in India and working as a partner in 'Silk Road Connect', an educational initiative launched by 'cellist Yo Yo Ma's Silk Road Project in New York in 2009.

**Longer cv:**

Jenny Balfour-Paul, writer, artist, traveller and international lecturer, has researched and worked with indigo for over two decades. Practical experience with indigo plants and dyeing (including teaching and exhibiting her own work), combined with living and working in the Middle East and North Africa, led on to her PhD at Exeter University's Arabic Department. Based on firsthand fieldwork in many Arab countries, this was subsequently published as *Indigo in the Arab World* in 1997. Balfour-Paul's research trips extended to Asia and Africa when she was commissioned by British Museum Press to write a book on Indigo worldwide (*Indigo*, 1998; reprinted in 2006 by Archetype Publications Ltd.).

Balfour-Paul writes, lectures, teaches and broadcasts in the U.K. and overseas on indigo and many other textile, history and travel subjects. She continues to travel widely in pursuit of her research projects, including a journey to Bhutan in 2004, where, among other things, she looked at lac and lacquerwork. She is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at Exeter University, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Royal Asiatic Society, former member of the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, founding member of the Eden Project's Indigo team, regular contributor to *Geographical*, and contributing editor to *HALI* journal of textiles, carpets and Islamic arts. In 2002, Balfour-Paul exhibited her collection of Arab Costumes at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at Exeter University. She was consultant curator for 'Indigo: A Blue to Dye For', a major indigo exhibition initiated by Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery that toured UK throughout 2007, and organiser of the related international seminar. Indigo artwork commissioned for the exhibition was loaned to the Textile Museum, Washington DC in 2008 for their exhibition 'Blue' (for which Jenny lectured).

Current projects include research into shipwrecks with cargoes of indigo and other dyestuffs, involvement in revivals of natural dyestuffs and the completion of a book

based on her discovery in the British Library of a Victorian traveller's unpublished illustrated journals. In 2009 she was invited to become a partner in 'Silk Road Connect', an educational initiative launched by 'cellist Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project team that aims to bring 'passion-driven' learning into New York's most deprived Middle Schools, using indigo as a model to connect social studies, ancient history, language arts, mathematics, science, and the visual and performing arts.