

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLECTION

Text of Narration

PUT SLIDE #2
(00009) ON THE
SCREEN AS YOU
READ THE
INTRODUCTION

This show is a look at the best embroideries in our Guild Collection and I hope it will give you an idea of the quality of the pieces it contains and the range of techniques they represent. It has been put together by Gunnel Teitel, the Collection photographer in New York who made all the slides, and Ann Hottelet, the Committee Chairman before the move to Louisville who wrote this narration. (Some revision has been made by the present Committee, 1992.)

Before showing the slides - a short history of this Collection. In 1957 the American Branch of The Embroiderers' Guild in England was formed in New York City. By 1961, with 300 members from 35 states (no chapters yet!) a National Headquarters was established in New York; classes were organized, a reference library formed and catalogued, and portfolios of needlework specimens were put together for rental. **That** was the beginning of our Collection. In 1970 the Board decided to withdraw from the British organization and the Embroiderers' Guild of America was born. Members of this newborn Guild donated samples of their own work and pieces they had collected to augment the small body of embroideries at National Headquarters; a windfall in the form of a generous donation of antique

study fragments from the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York City really put the infant Collection on the map. It has been expanded over the years by further donations, bequests, and purchases by the Collection Committee, of contemporary, ethnic and other worthwhile pieces.

At present the Collection contains about 380 items. They are primarily for study. The Collection offers, as you shall see, examples of many of the techniques worked with a threaded needle. Some are historic and valuable, like the sampler on the screen now; some are mere fragments, though antique and exquisite; and some are just very competent examples of a specific needlework genre. While the Collection does not own many embroideries of museum quality, it contains no junk; each piece is well worked and intrinsically interesting.

Now for the slides, but first let me show you how the Collection is housed. These are the cabinets and wall storage systems which contain the embroideries. Flat items are laid in the cabinet drawers interleaved with acid free paper; the larger textiles are on hollow rollers, encased in muslin sleeves made especially to fit; the rollers are hung on wall brackets with large dowels; the vertical bins have dividers to store framed pieces upright with muslin dust covers on the front.

Now we have the Collection itself..... First, some of our **Samplers**. This one is our most prized and most

REVERSE TO
SLIDE #1

SLIDE #2
(00009)

valuable possession. It shows Adam and Eve and the Tree of Life with the Serpent coiled around the trunk - a popular subject when the sampler was worked in 1789 by 8-year old Margaret Ramsey of Albany, NY. The design is delightfully spontaneous and naive, like most children's embroideries. Behind Adam and Eve is a fence and flower garden, then a cottage with windows worked in needlelace. This sampler looked like a crumpled dishrag until we had it cleaned, conserved, and mounted in an ultra-violet ray proof box frame; the colors came out as fresh as new. The embroidery is done in marking silk on hand-woven linen, with split stitch, chain, buttonhole, satin, cross and needlelace.

SLIDE #3
(00010)

A Spanish sampler, worked by another child, 7-year old Dona Maria de las Angeles; she included the date of its completion - July 2, 1817. In contrast to the first sampler, it is quite formal and grownup, exquisitely stitched and obviously done under adult supervision. The stitchery is in double columns of shallow and deep border designs, with blackwork and pulled thread stitches, satin, cross and long-armed cross. It is worked in silk on fine, handwoven linen. The colors are clear and bright. We had this sampler cleaned, too, and conserved and mounted like the Adam and Eve one.

SLIDE #4
(00075)

Another American sampler, also from the early 19th century. It is a family record, worked by Elizabeth Briggs, registering the births and deaths of the nine children of

Ebenezer Baldwin and his wife Susannah Bailey, who were married February 21, 1799. This sampler gives us an awful warning! You see the blotched area on the right? Someone tried to clean the piece and did not first test the threads used for color fastness and the black ran. **Before wet cleaning anything, ALL threads must be tested individually to see if they are fast.** The embroidery and lettering is worked in silk on handwoven linen, using rococco and the usual sampler stitches. The sampler contains a poem on "Education" in typical pious 19th century style; the two top verses read "Her work completes / the Great Design / And fills the soul with joy divine", and "Where reason fails / With all her powers / There faith prevails / And love adores".

SLIDE #5
(00017)

Here is a group of motifs for mourning pictures, very popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These motifs are worked in cross stitch on natural linen with silk thread. Note how one design is upside down; it was easier to get to the empty space in the working cloth by turning it around!

SLIDE #6
(00022)

This is one of several stitch samplers in the Collection. It contains pulled and counted thread stitches for decorating linens, and pattern darning, buttonhole, and detached buttonhole edgings. The horizontal openwork is insertion stitches. This piece was worked in the 1960's. Note the interesting fasteners in the lower section.

SLIDE #7
(00136)

Another 20th century sampler of pulled work stitches. I must tell you, for those of you who don't know, that in museum terminology 'pulled work' is defined as 'deflected element', the element being the threads **pulled together** in the working cloth. Whereas the term 'withdrawn element' refers to work in which threads are **removed** from the working cloth, a technique commonly known as 'drawn threadwork'. The words 'pulled' and 'drawn' were often confused, hence these rather pompous terms; but they do rule out confusion.

Reading top to bottom, this sampler is worked in ringed back stitch, honeycomb, chessboard, mosaic, diamond satin filling, chequer, and star eyelet, with rows of three-sided stitch, satin, and cable between the blocks.

SLIDE #8
(00013)

And now a decorative sewing sampler; turn of the century and probably German. It contains counted thread fillings and edgings, needlelace insertions with chain stitch, buttonhole, and French knots. The folded tape insertion is interesting.

SLIDE #9
(00028)

Now we come to some of our **Whitework** embroidery examples. Whitework preceded lace as a decorative textile and is one of the older forms of embroidery. Whitework was done mainly on clothing and household linens subject to dirt, wear and tear, so historic pieces are rarely found.

Whitework depends on fineness of execution and design

for its charm and value, because there is no distraction of color and the eye is drawn directly to the stitchery. There are several kinds of whitework: Ayrshire (âr' shîr) (like the piece on the screen), tambour (tăm' bŏör) work, Dresden work, Broderie Anglaise, Mountmellick, and Richelieu, among others.

As I said, the embroidery on the screen now is an Ayrshire fichu (fish' ŏŏ; French, fê' shü) or neckpiece. Ayrshire work started in Scotland in the late 18th century as a cottage industry; it copied the French tambour work done with a crochethook-like tool, which produced a fine and regular chain stitch. Ayrshire was called "sewed" muslin, to distinguish it from the mechanically produced tambour work. The muslin was woven in Scotland from raw American cotton, but with the onset of the Civil War in America and the blockade of the southern ports, the raw material was no longer available to the Scottish mills, so Ayrshire work died.

This fichu is worked on 96 count muslin; the solid motifs are in satin stitch with stem outlining the filled areas. The fillings are needlelace and drawn thread work and the fern-like sprigs are satin stitch over 2 or 3 threads!

Another piece of Ayrshire, a handkerchief, in a different design.

This closeup shows the closely packed satin stitch

SLIDE #10
(00175)

SLIDE #11
(00175)

areas with punched and overcast holes like Broderie Anglaise.

SLIDE #12
(00085)

Here is an exquisite example of pulled thread work, perhaps intended for insertion or appliqué for clothing. It is turn of the century, from Hungary. The design contains mosaic, herringbone, chessboard and faggot fillings, which you can identify in this closeup. The pulled work is on 64 count muslin in 1 or 2 strands of silk floss. The outline is split stitch in several strands, with buttonhole stitch around the center.

SLIDE #13
(00085)

SLIDE #14
(00098)

A sheetband done in the style of Dresden work, which originated in Dresden, Germany at the beginning of the 18th century, as a substitute for lace. Lace had become enormously expensive because of demand, taxes and the rising cost of production, so this fine whitework became a substitute; its popularity reached its peak in the mid 1700's and spread to England and America. It was a parent of Ayrshire, examples of which you saw in the previous 3 slides.

This sheetband must be early 19th century because it was in the trousseau of the donor's great-grandmother and came to the Guild in the 1970's. Incidentally, sheetbands, like many other decorative elements in household linens and clothing, were often removed from worn out sheets and reapplied to new ones. The design has drawn threadwork fillings and Italian quilting trailings.

SLIDE #15
(00098)

In this detail you can see the fine backstitch along the cording channels, 48 stitches to the inch! The backing, necessary for this quilting, has been cut away behind the openwork fillings.

SLIDE #16
(00173)

Another kind of whitework, Broderie Anglaise. This term applies to all kinds of openwork embroidery where a pattern of holes is either cut or punched and then the holes overcast with embroidery thread. This type of embroidery is found not only in England, as the term implies, but also in Ireland and Switzerland as decoration for underclothes, baby clothes, and household linens and was popular after 1850. This piece has, in addition to the holes, fine satin stitch leaves joined by stem stitch and trailings.

SLIDE #17
(00166)

Casalguidi work is a type of ethnic whitework from northern Italy. The fabric of this tablecloth is heavy linen. The four corner triangles are worked in a pulled thread stitch and form a ground upon which flower petals, worked separately in detached buttonhole, are applied; the stems are wrapped or buttonholed; the tassels are balls covered with a detached buttonhole casing, with knotted fringes.

SLIDE #18
(00105)
(00005)
(00055)

This slide was made during one of our Chapter Viewing programs in New York. The little boy's whitework dress dates from the middle of the 19th century and is typical of what little boys wore at that time. The dress is decorated

in Broderie Anglaise with an extremely simple design.

The French court coat is not whitework but instead is embroidered with flat silk on gray silk shot with gold. It is from the 18th century.

The superb whitework and needlelace tablecloth on the right was given by the Dowager Empress of China in the late 19th century to Miss Mary Porter, the first unmarried American woman missionary, in recognition of her service. It was given to the Collection by Carolyn Ambuter. The next two slides show it in greater detail.

SLIDE #19
(00105)

The whitework is mostly in satin stitch, stem and Chinese knots. The border is worked in Tenerife lace: that is, worked directly into cutout squares; whereas the whole center of the cloth is Tenerife **embroidery**, in which the threads of the cloth fabric are not withdrawn or cut, but used to work the design.

SLIDE #20
(00105)

This closeup shows you how complicated and exquisite the embroidery is. The Chinese, by the way, were great imitators, and copied many forms of embroidery for export, in this case using a Spanish pattern.

SLIDE #21
(00178)

A small doily in pulled work with needleweaving. The holes are cutwork with only a few of the verticals removed. The border is done with hemstitching and feather stitch.

SLIDE #22
(00178)

You can appreciate the fineness of the stitching in this closeup.

SLIDE#23
(00103)

Now for some **Counted Thread** pieces. This sampler was done in the 1960's by a student of Edith John, a well-known English embroiderer and teacher. You see a series of blackwork patterns and motifs. They are not reversible, which makes for a less crisp looking design, but they show a good range of stitch patterns and values.

Blackwork is a very old and traditional embroidery style. Chaucer, in the *Canterbury Tales*, described the carpenter's wife's dress in *The Miller's Tale*: "White was her smock, embroidered all before and even behind, her collar round about, of coal-black silk, on both sides, in and out; The strings of the white cap upon her head Were, like her collar, black silk worked with thread..." This is in the 1390's, please note. Embroidery styles come and go, as we know; it was not until 150 years later that blackwork reached its high point of popularity, introduced, it is said, by the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon after her marriage to Henry VIII in 1509. Certainly the blackwork patterns used in England at that time were in the geometric style of Arab decoration with which Catherine would have been familiar from childhood, since the Arabs occupied Southern Spain for many centuries until their expulsion in 1492. Blackwork was used to embellish collars and cuffs and had to be reversible to make turnbacks possible; the reversible patterns are called Holbein stitch today because Holbein, a court portraitist in the reign of Henry VIII,

recorded the embroidery in minutest detail in many of his portraits. The term 'Holbein' stitch is late 19th century, however, and is synonymous with 'double running stitch'.

SLIDE #24
(00106)

This stylized flower shows a good balance of dark and light achieved by using stitches of varying density. Today blackwork is done in a variety of colors.

SLIDE #25
(00102 A & B)

Assisi work is another counted thread style. Here we have a pair of napkin cases in contemporary Assisi, native to that city of St. Francis, halfway between Florence and Rome. Assisi embroidery dates from the end of the Middle Ages and was first worked by nuns to make altar cloths. The design is outlined and left unworked and the background, or negative space, is filled in. In the 14th and 15th centuries Assisi work was done in pale gold silk on natural linen, using cross stitch on the background, and was only for church use; during the Renaissance the work was still ecclesiastical, but other colors, such as red and green, were used, and other stitches - the long-armed cross, Italian 2-sided stitch, and the pulled thread 4-sided stitch appeared. During the 17th century the vogue for Assisi work disappeared and this embroidery was not worked again until the early 20th century, when it was revived as a cottage industry to provide extra income for peasant families. Now the work became secular and only cross stitch was used, but double running, or Holbein borders were added. These two pieces are done in cross

stitch with Holbein borders, in Renaissance colors!

SLIDE #26
(00117)

Beadwork is essentially a counted thread technique, too. This is a 19th century purse fragment from Bologna, Italy. Seed beads are mounted on fine canvas, 32 threads to the inch, and each bead is sewn down individually over each canvas intersection. The colors are still bright and are worked into a design with leaves and flowers.

SLIDE #27
(00063)

The Collection has some fine **Canvaswork**. This first example is a pair of fragments from 17th century Italy, a gift of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. The fragments are probably from a wall hanging; they are worked in flat silk on a fine, tabbyweave fabric. The ground embroidery is a diamond pattern, with leaves and flowers. The parrot is worked in encroaching gobelin. The colors are still very bright and fresh.

SLIDE #28
(00172 A)

This **petit point** floral motif worked in soft cotton is an insertion for a purse. The shading is particularly good.

SLIDE #29
(00242)

A chair seat is worked in oblique gobelin in muted colored wools. The woman's face is worked in tent stitch, using the continental method. A matching piece is in the Art Institute of Chicago.

SLIDE #30
(00064)

These are embroidered slips, or individually worked embroidery motifs, probably 18th century. These so-called slips were common in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries in

England and were intended for appliqué onto wall hangings, panels, and, in the 17th century, stumpwork boxes. Slips were 2 or 3 inches high, in the form of flowers, sprigs, leaves and branches, animals or human figures, and could be removed from worn-out hangings and re-applied to new ones. Four of these motifs on the screen are in tent stitch, one in long-armed cross, all worked on canvas; the other two are worked in crewel wool on cloth in long and short stitch.

SLIDE #31
(00083)

Now for some **Crewel** embroideries. These two 18th century crewel fragments are part of the Cooper-Hewitt gift. They are from bedhangings or a spread, and show a strong Chinese influence in the larger design elements and use of color gradation. Wool thread is used on linen twill. The stitches are chain, satin, and stem. Notice how brilliant the colors are. We have been given a misconception that crewel is done in muted colors, when the truth is, time and use have faded the dyes. If the object has been stored away from light it will still show its original colors. Also the back of the piece will reveal the true colors.

SLIDE #32
(00093)

Here is a twentieth century interpretation of a Jacobean crewelwork motif of the 17th century. The designs of so-called Jacobean embroidery are usually bold and heavy, in direct stylistic contrast to the piece of

American crewel you will see next. The Jacobean piece is worked in crewel wool on linen twill in a great variety of stitches.

SLIDE #33
(00168)

See the contrast! The slide shows part of a bedhanging worked in the 18th century in the Connecticut River Valley, before the Revolution. The embroidery is worked with hand-dyed blue wools on hand spun and hand woven linen in buttonhole, stem, seeding, and New England laid stitches. We know it is pre-Revolutionary because after that time, wool was no longer used as an embroidery thread, and linen was substituted. This fragment came from the collection of Muriel Baker and was acquired by the Guild in 1983.

SLIDE #34
(00243)

Muriel Baker gave us this mermaid, which she herself worked on antique linen; the design is her adaptation of a motif from an early New England bedhanging. A photograph can be found on page 44 of her book, *A Handbook of American Crewel Embroidery*. It is interesting that Joan Edwards, in her book, *Crewel Embroidery in England*, has an illustration of the same mermaid, in outline, worked by a little girl in 1829. Muriel has used split, bullion, New England laid, outline, and long and short stitches. Her colors are predominantly blues and yellows; the English version is dark, in brown tones.

SLIDE #35
(00158)

The Collection contains very little quilting. Storage

is a problem, and there are so many magnificent collections of quilts easily available for study that we have not yet attempted to acquire them. However, here is a fragment of 18th century quilting, worked either in England or India. It was probably part of a dress or petticoat, certainly something destined for hard wear, because the quilting is backstitched finely, 16 stitches to the inch. The quilted fragment has a flower motif embroidered with silk floss using a tambour hook.

SLIDE #36
(00031)

Now comes **Lace**. The Collection has a variety of different laces, and the medallion on the screen now is one of our finest examples. From the museum point of view there are only two kinds of true lace - needlelace and bobbin; all other kinds are considered to be imitations, and that goes for knitted lace, crocheted, tatted, knotted, tape, and, of course, machine-made laces. Needlelace and bobbin lace are often combined, and the result is called pieced lace. Then there is **mezzo punto**, literally half lace, which is a combination of needlelace and tape lace.

All needlemade lace is detached buttonhole stitch - twisted, plain, knotted, up and down; there are many versions.

The bowknot on the screen is an example of one of the finer needlemade laces - Point de Gaze, from the Brussels area of Belgium. It was made from the 1850's to the

1930's, and takes its name from the gauzy, delicate, detached buttonhole stitches of the mesh background. This lace became popular after the novelty of machine-made lace wore off in the first half of the 19th century.

SLIDE #37
(00232)

Here is a sample of the **mezzo punto**, or half lace, I mentioned. The tapes in the design are bobbin-made, enclosing needlelace fillings, and the design elements are joined with buttonholed bars called 'brides' (breeds), spelled like brides but pronounced breeds.

SLIDE #38
(00035)

A combination of needle and bobbin lace is shown in this slide of pieced lace. The head and the second border from it are needlelace. The other borders are bobbin lace. The piece is all handmade, and probably a mixture of homemade and purchased lace from the late 18th or early 19th century.

SLIDE #39
(00252 A & B)

These are typical bobbin lace edgings, over-embroidered in silk. They probably came from Eastern Europe.

SLIDE #40
(00141 B)

A piece of a pillow cover border in the style of 16th century Sicilian **punto tirato**, which means lace with withdrawn threads. This is a lace form of ancient origin, dating back to Egyptian times, and is made by withdrawing groups of threads from cloth in both directions and pulling those threads left into a mesh, then weaving threads over the mesh to create a design; it is really a combination of drawn thread, pulled thread, and darning. Other forms of

punto tirato left the design as whole cloth and withdrew only the background threads to leave a plain or pulled mesh.

SLIDE #41
(00040)

This is an Irish crochet lace collar from the late 19th or early 20th century. The ground is crocheted and decorated with shamrocks, roses and circles; there is a continuous border of larger scale motifs, all crocheted, with some openwork areas. The ground was usually worked last. Lacemaking was started in Ireland in earnest after the 1846-48 potato famine; needlemade, embroidered and crochet lace-making was started as a cottage industry, using continental European laces as models.

SLIDE #42
(00048)

Another fine Irish lace is called Carrickmacross, from the town of that name north of Dublin. Lacemaking began there about 1820 and was also a cottage industry. The design was drawn on a backing cloth, which was overlaid by machine-made net when it became available and then topped by transparent muslin. The muslin was then attached to the net with close whipping stitches, following the design outlines on the backing. Then the excess muslin was trimmed away and the design elements decorated with needle-run fillings. This particular piece is Carrickmacross **guipure** (gwee' pure), a term which always denotes a lace in which the design elements are connected by worked bars instead of being attached to a net backing. In this example, the flowered Hardanger center is backed by

machine-made net which has been hand embroidered, or needle-run.

SLIDE #43

You can see the working in detail in this close-up.

SLIDE #44
(00241)

A gorgeous handkerchief is made of hand-knotted net, often called **lacis** (lasseese') or **filet** lace. It is surely for show, and not for blow! The design is darned onto the knotted net background. Note that the border is knotted in a different pattern.

SLIDE #45
(00150)

Here is a third kind of lace - tape lace. In this case, Battenberg. Tape lace goes back to the 16th century with the early laces from Milan, Italy. At that time handmade tapes made with bobbins, formed the skeleton of the design. In the 19th century tapes came to be made by machine, and Battenberg lace was developed as we know it today. This piece is a tea cloth, and a fine example. It has fine tape scrolls and leaf motifs filled with different needlelace stitches. I believe there are over 80 stitches that can be used in Battenberg lace. This type of lace has different names in different countries. In England, for example, it is called Branscombe, whereas, in America it is called Battenberg, and in Belgium it is known as Renaissance lace.

SLIDE #46
(00217)

The Collection has a variety of interesting **Silkwork** pieces. I have chosen two antique examples first. The one on the screen is a piece of tambour work, done with a

crochethook-like instrument on fabric stretched tightly over a frame. Tambour is the French word for drum. The thread remains below the fabric and the work can go rapidly, accurately, and be extremely fine. As I said during the whitework slides, tambouring was also a whitework technique. This silk piece also incorporates chenille thread in the floral design.

SLIDE #47
(00213)

This second antique fragment is also tambour work. It is a very finely worked monochrome fragment with stitch direction giving life to the design.

SLIDE #48
(00100)

On the screen now is a hunting scene, worked in Vienna, Austria, in 1820. It was fashionable at that time to embroider such scenes as pictures; the motifs were often taken from book illustrations thrown together without any thought of relative size; so the bird and insect you see are quite out of proportion! The overall effect of this embroidery befits its age - rich and romantic. It is worked in silk on a silk ground, and its creator went all out to achieve a realistic effect; the dog has a glass eye, the horse has a real horsehair mane and tail, the saddlecloth edging, stirrups, and gun are metal thread, the dog is laid chenille. The workmanship is excellent, the foliage worked in flat silk is exquisite and the colors are bright as new.

SLIDE #49
(00100)

SLIDE #50
(00099)

This is a miniature cope, traditionally made for adorning figures of saints on holy days. It is late 18th

century from its inscription and probably Austrian; it is inscribed "Fransisca von Schatten, 1798"; the cope measures 24 by 14 inches. The work is flat silk embroidery on silk with a shell pattern bobbin lace border in metallic thread and has glass stones applied. The cope has been stabilized by attaching it to a firmly woven fabric.

SLIDE #51
(00101)

Now to the other side of the world - here's a pair of Chinese sleeve bands embroidered in silk, on a silk ground woven in the traditional cloudband pattern. The chrysanthemums are outlined in tightly crimped couched silk and the petals are filled in with Chinese knots. The brown leaf outlines are in couched gold which has oxidized.

SLIDE #52
(00196)

This Japanese kimono fragment is quite traditional with its clouds, plum blossoms, trees and waves, with bamboo at the bottom. The design is a repeat pattern and panoramic in the Japanese style of painting. The background silk, backed with black paper, was originally white and has been resist dyed in black and dark blue.

SLIDE #53
(00146)

While we are in the Far East, this is a goldwork motif from an early 19th century Chinese court robe. The robe is made of heavy blue silk covered with couched gold and peacock feathers. While the background silk and the gold are in good condition, the couching threads are broken in many places, and there is a year's work of restoration for some patient volunteer.

SLIDE #54
(00219)

The Collection has a number of examples of **Traditional** or **Ethnic** embroidery from many different countries. Embroidery all over the world has three things in common, the **ground** upon which it is worked, like linen, cotton, wool, or silk; the **threads**; and the **stitches** used to carry out the design. The design is the distinguishing factor. Cross, satin, chain, outline, buttonhole, back, split, couching, and knots are stitches common to many ethnic embroideries. They may have different names in different countries, but there really are only so many stitches in the world, like there are only so many literary plots, or basic mechanical devices.

On the screen now is a man's wedding tie from Sweden, dated 1827. It is made of black silk brocaded ribbon, with embroidered ends.

SLIDE #55
(00121 B)

A ceremonial towel from Russia is worked with natural linen in cross stitch, the most frequently used stitch in Russian peasant embroidery.

SLIDE #56
(00119)

Fez is a 9th century city in Morocco famed for its crafts as well as its history. The Tree of Life design in this fragment is typical of the region and is worked in reversible cross stitch in silk thread. Mauve, black, dark green, and red are favorite colors when used on tablecloths, pillow covers, and clothing.

SLIDE #57
(00079)

A **poukamiso** is a traditional Cretan skirt which is worn under a three quarter length shirt. The skirt

fragment has a stylized carnation, very common in the eastern Mediterranean, and is worked on linen in dark red flat silk, a material also common to the whole area.

SLIDE #58
(00130)

Note this interesting piece of weaving from the Balkans; it was probably a dress front. The warp is cotton and the weft is wool with floating wefts. Metallic threads highlight the geometric design.

SLIDE #59
(00091)

The graceful design in this fragment of a bedspread from Bokhara, in Turkestan, is similar to the floral patterns of Persia. This entire area is famed for its embroideries. The solid areas are done in Bokhara stitch, similar to Rumanian, but the tie-down threads are longer and slanting and when lined up properly, give the effect of a twill weave. The heavy outlines are ladder stitch; the threads are silk.

SLIDE #60
(00205)

This band or border is eastern European, probably from the Balkan area, and was used to embellish clothing.

SLIDE #61
(00202)

Perhaps this fragment of embroidery from Turkey is a headscarf. Headscarves are an important part of the traditional women's dress. This piece is interesting because of the use of gold plate, which has been worked **through** the background material, rather than couched.

SLIDE #62
(00210)

Here is a complete Turkish headscarf, of fine wool with silk embroidery. Incidentally, the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C. has a magnificent collection of headscarves.

SLIDE #63
(00206)

This fragment of Turkish pattern darning is probably from a dress rather than a household linen, because it has a carefully disguised seam down the middle. The design is done in flat silk and the change of direction in the darning, with the resulting play of light, makes the design quite complex. The red silk is the same that we have seen in other Mediterranean countries, from Morocco in the west, then Crete, and now Turkey.

SLIDE #64
(00123)

These next few slides show work from Central and South America. Repeated motifs are typical of pattern darning as seen in this piece from Mexico.

SLIDE #65
(00116)

The bright colors often seen in Mexican embroidery were used in this pattern darning.

SLIDE #66
(00255)

Molas come from the San Blas Islands off the Caribbean entrance to the Panama Canal. This is a distinctive form of reverse appliqué, sometimes five layers deep, which was taught the Cuna Indians by missionaries in the mid-19th century. Encouraged to wear clothes, the Indian women transferred tribal body paint designs to cloth rectangles which then served as the back and front panels of modest, short sleeved blouses. Some molas are very finely stitched and surface stitchery is often used as an accent. This mola depicts a bird - natural objects are common motifs.

SLIDE #67
(00240)

Here we have a political protest in embroidery form. The **arpillera** (ar' pi yer'a) gets its name from the Spanish for burlap, since burlap is the ground fabric. Many

similar embroideries have been, and are being, worked in Chile by women who have lost their menfolk by imprisonment or death to raise funds for self support. These quite naive peasant embroideries depict village scenes, arts and crafts, community happenings, and the local landscape. Until 1984, when the Chilean government banned it, they carried hand-embroidered slogans. This scene shows the processing of wool, with weaving at the top, then carding, knitting, and dyeing.

SLIDE #68
(00057)

Finally, we come to some of the Collection's **Contemporary** embroideries. A floor mat by Mariska Karasz is on the screen now. Mariska Karasz was a Hungarian who lived in America - she died some years ago - and was perhaps the first "free" or "creative" stitcher of the 20th century to achieve recognition. In her work and writings she gave enormous impetus to the free use of conventional stitches, textured threads and color. She really opened the door to experimental embroidery, an innovation which was startling in the early years, but which has attained total acceptance today. The floor mat is worked on coarse Penelope canvas in a variety of threads - jute, wools and fine and coarse cottons. Mariska used raised stem, random spiderwebs, outline, and couching in this piece worked in the 1950's.

SLIDE #69
(00192)

Mariska Karasz worked this piece for a friend who was

building a house. The design represents all that was going on in that friend's head during the building. It is worked on linen and largely with couched string. Other stitches include chain, ladder, herringbone, and stem. The white blob is the camera light's reflection on the glass of the frame - nothing to do with the design!

SLIDE #70
(00097)

From Sweden, we have a work by Anna Lisa Cruse, a well-known ecclesiastical embroiderer; it is called "St. Simon and his Saw" and was made in 1961. The saw is the zig-zag thing on the left. The work is mostly string, wrapped and then couched, with touches of surface embroidery. A great variety of threads is used: linen, pearl cotton, Danish flower thread and others. The embroidery is quite small, and it has a colorful and much alive dignity.

SLIDE #71
(00096)

Another piece of experimental stitchery was worked by Georgiana Brown Harbeson of Philadelphia, PA, in 1975. The title is "Ecology", and the design represents the interdependence of the elements, water and air, and the fishes and birds inhabiting them. The whole piece has a great rhythm - the continuing interchange between sky and sea. There is a mixture of stitches: stem, chain, buttonhole, needleweaving, and appliqué, including pieces of shiny Kleenex boxes! This work won a prize at an exhibition of experimental embroidery, which was held in Paris.

SLIDE #72
(00058)

Joy Clucas, an English embroiderer who specializes in machine embroidery, worked this clever wall hanging, which was bought by the Guild in 1972. The optical illusion is fascinating. You can see that there are 24 design blocks, each identical in construction, but the variation in color combinations makes them all look different. Each group of four blocks is tied together with machine stitching to create a 3-dimensional unit. It takes careful looking to realize the depth of focus achieved in this hanging. [HOLD ON SCREEN FOR 15 SECONDS OR SO.]

SLIDE #73
(00073)

Kate Doty's jacket, skirt, and sash ensemble was worked in the 1960's and donated to the Guild. The jacket and skirt are patchwork, the seams embellished with woven ribbons; the finished garments are further embellished with surface stitchery, shisha mirrors, and tiny gold dangles. The workmanship is immaculate. You get an idea of how immaculate from a close-up of one of the pockets. The material is polished cotton, by the way.

SLIDE #74
(00073)

Nellie Bergh calls this wallhanging "Madder and Fustic", the names of the two dyeing agents she used to color her wools. The design is three poplar trees and was embroidered in 1967 after Nellie studied dyeing under Alma Lesch of Kentucky. Madder is the most enduring red dye, and comes from the roots of an Eurasian herb of that name and used since ancient times. Fustic is a yellow obtained from mulberry root. With these two dyestuffs and several

SLIDE #75
(00074)

different mordants - substances which fix the dyes - Nellie was able to produce the range of colors you see. The wools are invisibly couched through the center with cotton thread.

SLIDE #76
(00128)

This is an embroidery called "New Horizons", by Helen Richards of California; it was the gift of the Long Island Chapter of New York. It is largely layers of net and chiffon appliquéd onto upholstery fabric with embroidery in many different threads.

SLIDE #77
(00188)

This is one of a series of machine embroideries by Barbara Lee Smith of Chicago. It is called "View from Within - A Summer Place". It was worked in the early 1980's; it is entirely machine embroidery on a hand-dyed background. Barbara tells that she dyed the background silk with Inko dyes, which are developed in sunlight. The background is then machine-stitched according to the design. Barbara says the dyes produce the color and the stitching produces the texture.

SLIDE #78
(00002)

"Progressions" is a detached buttonhole, 3-dimensional embroidery from Sheila Ashby, a Scottish embroiderer who now lives in the United States and studied at the famous Glasgow School of Art under Kathleen Whyte. She calls this "Progressions", meaning, among others, progressions of color from top to bottom. I was taking classes from her in New York when she was working this piece, mixing threads in the needle to achieve the color sequences and figuring out

how to negotiate the curves at the edges of the design. As I said, the entire piece is in detached buttonhole stitch, a stitch which Sheila is still exploring in many different ways.

SLIDE #79
(00254)

The Collection Committee commissioned this mixed media embroidery on canvas from Carolyn Ambuter, whom I'm sure you all know as the author of *The Open Canvas*; it was worked in 1984. The piece is worked on 24 threads to the inch congress canvas and features reticella, Hedebo and several pulled work areas in the design, together with couching and stem stitch.

SLIDE #80
(00189)

The last slide is a delightful little creation from Wilcke Smith of New Mexico, a 1984 acquisition. It is called "Cloudsweepers III", one of a series of miniatures Wilcke did based on New Mexican Indian mythology. The background material is amate (ă mǎ' te) bark paper from Mexico; the figures are worked in detached buttonhole stitch; the brooms are pheasant feathers; the clouds are brushed mohair; metallic threads make the stars twinkle.

I hope that you now have some idea of the range of the EGA Collection, and that these slides have given you an understanding of the tremendous scope of embroidery, broader really than painting, sculpture, or the graphic arts. Just think that everything you have seen, with the one exception of our bobbin lace examples, was done with one tool: the **needle**.