



# Evaluating Embroidery: Judging Your Own Work



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Top center: *EGA Collection #00510*, "Wave" by Cecile P. Carver  
Top right: *EGA Collection #00923*, Diamond Sampler by Paula Heckman  
Bottom left: *EGA Collection #01045*, Drawn Thread Sampler by Unknown Artist  
Bottom center: *EGA Collection #00560*, Florentine Sampler by Unknown Artist  
Bottom right: *EGA Collection #00820*, "Night Falls on the Prairie" by Mary Sustrik

Needle and thread icon designed by Freepix from Flaticon.



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# Introduction

Needlework projects are undertaken for various reasons, some as a learning experience, some to calm the psyche, some for the pure pleasure of stitching and some because the finished product is desired. Many stitchers reach a point, while working on a project, where they look at their work and decide that they are happy with their efforts or that they need to change some of the elements in the design. This is not always a conscious decision. Quite often the stitcher abandons a project due to some undefined displeasure. Many projects are relegated to the back of the closet because the stitcher feels unsure of what she/he is doing and does not know how to proceed. A critical look at the work with a questioning eye might reveal the problem as well as the solution.

In order to produce a project worthy of the time, effort, and money expended in its creation, you must pause often during the work to evaluate whether it is progressing in a satisfactory way. You would be wise to look at the piece critically after working a small area of each new stitch and thread. It would be easy for you to change the stitches or threads or to alter other elements at this stage before a great deal of stitching has been done. If you find that there is a nagging doubt about what you are doing, it is best to address the problem immediately rather than waiting until the area is completely stitched.

When assessing a project, you should begin by evaluating the design. This evaluation should be one of the considerations in your decision to undertake the project, whether it is a class piece, a kit or an original work. You make design and color choices with your dollars purchasing a kit, chart, or class just as others make the design decisions for original work.

A good place to start is by reviewing the elements and principles of design. Elements are the building blocks of design; they are the tools you work with to produce a design. Principles are the rules that govern the use of these elements; they are used in deciding how the tools will be used. The elements include color, line, form/shape, space/motion, and texture. The principles are rhythm, balance, proportion, scale, emphasis, and harmony. While working on your piece evaluate it periodically by turning it 180 degrees, viewing it in a mirror, or photocopying it to evaluate the design by asking yourself the following questions. If you have trouble answering the questions on design or technique or have a lot of negative answers, consider ways to change the design or technique to make a pleasing work.

Pat Grappe  
Editor, 1991

## Overall Appearance

Overall appearance must be the primary consideration when a work is judged.

- Is it pleasing and appropriate for the use of the object?
- Is the fabric distorted?
- Is the design transferred accurately and all traces of the materials used to transfer the design removed?
- Is the item clean and not tired looking?
- Is the item free from odors that might be objectionable to the viewer – tobacco, perfumes, etc.

### *Technical Considerations*

- Are the chosen stitches appropriate for the area and used so they enhance the design?
- Are the stitches suitable for the shape to be covered, do they define the lines of the design, and are they in scale with the size of the design area?
- Are the textures balanced and the stitches compatible with those used in adjoining areas?
- Are the stitches worked correctly? (Unless they are distorted for a special effect or were altered to fit into an irregular area)?
- Are the threads carefully laid, the thread twist maintained or laid flat and smooth, and the tension uniform?
- Are the diagonals and curves accurately stitched?
- Are all outlines smooth and circles round?
- Are there missing stitches?
- Are all stitches worked in the same direction unless they are altered for design purposes?
- Are the threads worn or frayed?
- Is the back neat with no long carried threads, and the tails of the threads secured and clipped?
- Is it free from knots unless there is a specific reason to include them in a technique?
- Are the ends of the threads inconspicuous and not distorting the stitches on the surface?
- Are threads carried across areas where they will show through to the front?

### *Finishing*

- Is the work clean and blocked or pressed before finishing?
- Is the finishing appropriate to the technique and to the end use of the piece?
- Does the framing or poor finishing technique detract from needlework?

# Design and Color

The first concern for judging any piece of embroidery is the overall design intent and use of color to produce an emotional reaction in the viewer. This may be a positive or a negative reaction. The stronger the emotion evoked, the better the art.

## *Design*

- Is the piece suited to its purpose?
- Does the piece have impact?
- Is the design simple?
- Does the design express individuality and creative thinking?
- Is there a center of interest (focal point)?
- Is there a sense of order?
- Is the space divided into pleasing proportions?
- Does one side of the design seem heavier than the other (balance)?
- Does the eye move from one part of the design to another in an easy, flowing manner?
- Is there a pleasing relationship between all parts of the design in relation to each other and to the whole?
- Are the decorative elements used logically?

## *Color*

- Are the colors in good proportion to each other?
- Do the colors enhance each other?
- Is there a dominant color, a light or dark effect, a warm or cool effect, or a combination of these?
- Is there a variety of values and intensities?
- Are the colors suitable for the spot that the finished object will occupy?

## *Background*

- Is the background fabric/canvas suitable for the project?
- Is there enough contrast in value to highlight the design?
- Would a light or dark background be better than a middle value?
- Would a duller intensity work better?
- Is the relationship between the motifs and the background pleasing?

## *Materials and Techniques*

- Are the materials and techniques suitable for the project?
- Is the design suited to the materials and techniques that will be used?
- How well do the textures of the threads and fabrics relate to each other?
- Do the materials show forethought and integrity?

# Needlework Techniques

Each needlework technique has special problems and special things to look for when evaluating the work. There is no substitute for good design, correct selection of materials, and professional-looking finishing techniques. In any needlework project there are different things to look for in each technique used.

The following pages are not all inclusive. These questions serve as a starting point for looking at a piece critically. The techniques are arranged alphabetically, with some techniques listed under a broader heading (i.e. Assisi, blackwork, counted cross stitch, drawn thread, Hardanger, and pulled thread are all included under “Counted Thread”).

# Beadwork

Beadwork is the creation of fabric from beads stitched together by various techniques. It is also a type of embroidery in which beads are attached singly or in groups to a ground fabric.

## *General*

- Have the elements of color and design been applied?
- Is the selection of the beads appropriate? Are they even in quality with no broken or misshapen beads?
- Is the thread frayed? Is there visible thread where it should not be?

## *Stitches*

- Is there structural soundness to the beadwork?
- Is the tension even or appropriate for the correct structural quality, feel and shape of the desired piece?
- Are the stitches uniform within the parameters of the chosen stitch techniques such as: Peyote, Brick, Right Angle Weave, Square, Herringbone, and Loom Beading?

## *Beading*

- Are the beads attached to the fabric securely?
- Are threads and stitches hidden as appropriate?
- Are all markings covered or removed?

# Canvas Work

Canvaswork, or needlepoint as it is known in the United States, is embroidery on open, even-weave fabric, ranging from four threads to the inch to 64 or more threads to the inch.

## *General*

- Do the stitches enhance the design?
- Are the stitches the correct size for the areas where they are used?
- Are the threads suitable for the size of the canvas and for the stitches?
- Does any canvas show in areas where complete coverage is planned?
- Is the canvas square and not distorted?

## *Stitch Techniques*

- Are all stitches worked consistently?
- Are all stitches worked in the same direction unless turned for design reasons?
- Are the stitches compensated correctly along the edge of the design area?
- Are the proper number of strands used to achieve canvas coverage without packing and matting?
- Are the strands separated and rejoined so they lie smoothly?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Are all strands carefully laid so that they lie parallel to each other?
- Is a uniform tension maintained throughout?
- Does the back show good technique?
- Diagonal stitches
  - Are the stitches worked with the grain of the canvas?
  - Is there an absence of diagonal ridges?
  - Are threads started and ended horizontally or vertically?
- Florentine stitches
  - Is all of the canvas covered?
  - Are multiple strands of thread laid in such a way that they are untwisted and lie smoothly?

## *Appliqué*

- Is the appliqué smoothly attached?
- Is the appliqué securely fastened with the appropriate stitch?

# Counted Thread Embroidery

Counted thread embroidery is worked on an easily counted even weave fabric and includes the techniques of Assisi, blackwork, cross stitch, drawn thread, Hardanger, and pulled thread.

## *Assisi*

Assisi embroidery is a form of counted thread work in which the outline of the motif or design is worked in double running (Holbein) stitch, the background is worked in cross stitch and the motif is unworked.

- Is the background worked solidly in either cross stitch, long-armed cross stitch or two-sided Italian cross stitch?
- Are all top stitches worked in the same direction?
- Does the use of any compensating stitches complete the row?
- Is the counting accurate?
- Is the motif area unworked with double running stitch detail?
- Do the double running stitches lay smoothly in one line?
- Are appropriate threads and fabrics used?
- Is the appropriate number of strands or weight of thread used?
- Is the fabric free from distortion?
- Is a uniform tension maintained throughout?
- Are there holes caused by the stitches being pulled too tight?
- Do tails of the stitches on the back lie vertically?
- 

## *Blackwork*

Traditionally, blackwork was embroidery with black threads on white fabric in both surface stitchery and counted work. Contemporary blackwork can incorporate color.

- Are the appropriate threads, needles and fabrics used?
- Are the patterns appropriate for the areas where they are used?
- Is the appropriate number of strands or weight of thread used?
- Is uniform tension maintained?
- Are the threads laid smoothly with no twisting?
- Are compensating stitches correctly worked?
- Are the outlines appropriate, if used?
- Do outline stitches overwhelm the filling stitches they outline?
- Are threads on the back showing through the fabric to the front?
- Are threads started and ended invisibly?
- If metal thread is incorporated, is it tasteful and appropriate?
- Double running stitches
  - Are all stitches flat?
  - Do the stitches lie evenly?
  - If the stitches are split, is every one split?
  - Is the compensation well done?
  - Are there any breaks in the pattern?

## *Counted Thread, continued*

### *Cross Stitch*

Cross stitch embroidery traditionally employs the use of a simple “X” stitch. On samplers, other counted thread stitches may be added.

- Are the threads and fabrics appropriate?
- Are the appropriate number of strands or weight of thread used?
- Is the counting accurate?
- Do all of the top stitches lie in the same direction?
- Do the stitches share a common hole evenly?
- Is a uniform tension maintained?
- Is sufficient fabric left around the outside of the design to provide a well-proportioned background and to use in the finishing process?
- Are all of the design transfer markings removed?
- Are beginning and ending threads secured in the same direction and tension as the cross stitches?
- Is the back free of knots and long carrying threads?
- Do the stitches on the back all run in the same direction?

### *Drawn Thread*

Drawn thread work refers to embroidery in which threads are withdrawn from the fabric and the remaining strands are grouped and ornamented.

- Are the threads and fabrics appropriate?
- Are the colors of the thread appropriate to the ground fabric?
- Are the stitches regular with equal pull and tension throughout?
- Is the counting accurate?
- Are the edges of the open areas appropriately finished?
- Are the embellishing stitches correctly worked?
- Are the embellishing stitches appropriate to the area and to the use of the object?

### *Hardanger*

Hardanger (pronounced HAHHR-doung-er) embroidery is an ethnic embroidery with a lace-like appearance; it is classed as both counted cutwork and counted whitework. It is geometric, being composed of square and triangular (half square) medallions. Are the threads and fabric appropriate?

- Are the threads and fabric appropriate?
- Is the counting accurate?
- Is there fabric distortion caused by poor tension?
- Are the kloster (blocks) worked correctly?
- Are the embellishing stitches correctly worked?
- Are the embellishing stitches appropriate to the area and to the use of the object?
- Are eyelet open centers of uniform size?
- Are the appropriate areas cut?

Continued on next page

### *Counted Thread, Hardanger continued*

- Is the cutting done neatly and close to the kloster?
- Are there nub ends showing?
- Are the needle weaving and other fillings worked correctly and evenly?
- Is the number of weavings or wraps appropriate for the length of the bars?
- Are the weavings and wrappings smooth and evenly spaced?
- Are the picots all the same size?
- Are the picots centered on the bars?
- Are the legs of the Dove's eyes centered on each side?

### *Pulled Thread*

Pulled-thread embroidery is a form of counted thread embroidery and is also a type of whitework. The use of stitch tension distorts or draws the fabric threads together, creating open areas.

- Is the fabric suitable for pulled thread work?
- Are the appropriate weight, strength and color of thread used?
- Is the tension appropriate for the stitch and for the effect desired?
- Is the counting accurate?
- Is the tension uniform through a stitch area?
- Is the pull appropriate to the open look desired?
- If outlines are used, are they appropriate?
- Are compensating stitches correctly worked?
- Do the beginning and ending threads maintain the direction of the stitching?

# Crewel

Crewel is surface stitchery worked with a loosely twisted two-ply wool yarn on a firm linen fabric.

## *General*

- Are the fabrics and threads of suitable size for the design and for the stitches?
- Is the shading effective and suitable for the purpose?
- Does the shading follow pleasing contours?
- Are the colors well blended and obvious bands of color avoided, except where desired by design?
- Are the outlines covered?

## *Stitches*

- Are the stitches executed properly and used in the right places to enhance the design?
- Is the stitch suitable for the area where used?
- Is the stitch clearly recognizable?
- Are the stitches consistent in size, where this is appropriate?
- Is the stitch direction appropriate for the motif shape?
- Is the proper tension maintained?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Are the edges of the motifs smooth?
- Are ridges or dimples in stitching avoided?
- Are the beginnings and endings of the threads inconspicuous on the surface?
- Are the threads started and ended correctly on the reverse side?

# Fine Hand Sewing

Fine hand sewing can best be described as a technique used when holding the needle in one hand and the fabric over the fingers of the other hand.

## *General*

- Are the fabrics and threads suitable for the design and for the stitches?
- Is garment or other object well-constructed?
- Are rolled and whipped edges smooth and uniform?
- Are buttonholes worked correctly with stitches even and closely spaced?
- Are French seams neat, finely worked, yet strong with all raw edges concealed?

## *Stitches*

- Is the stitch clearly recognizable?
- Is the stitch direction appropriate to motif shape?
- Are all stitches consistent in size?
- Is the proper tension maintained?
- Are the beginnings and endings of the thread inconspicuous?

## *Tucks*

- Are the tucks uniform in size?
- Are the stitches of equal size and small enough?
- Are the stitches in straight lines?

## *Lace and Entredoux*

- Is lace attached inconspicuously and evenly?
- Where rows of lace are joined side by side, do the patterns match?
- Are entredoux joinings invisible?
- Are corner miters strong yet dainty?

# Metal Thread Embroidery

Metal thread embroidery is the embellishment of a ground fabric with metal threads. It is generally laid work. Metallic-coated kid leather can also be used.

## *General*

- Is the design concept suitable for metal thread embroidery?
- Are all transfer lines covered?
- If padding has been used, is it appropriate for the design area and is it completely covered by the metal thread?

## *Fabric*

- Is the fabric appropriate for the design?
- Does the fabric support the metal threads used?
- If a backing fabric is used, is it of an appropriate weight?
- Is there any puckering of the ground fabric from improper tensions used in the mounting of the fabric?

## *Metal Threads*

- Are the metal threads used appropriate for the design area and do they enhance the design?
- Do the colors of the metal threads enhance the design and each other?
- Is the attachment of the metal done properly?
- Are the attachment threads for jaceron or bullions visible?
- Are the metal threads laid and couched properly?
  - Are all couching stitches perpendicular to the metal threads?
  - Are all couching stitches evenly spaced?
  - Is the size of the couching stitches such that the metal threads are held firmly and cannot slide back and forth?
  - If two or more rows are couched, is bricking done properly?
  - Is the tension of the couching stitch such that the metal threads are not pinched?
  - Do the rows of metal thread lie smoothly on the surface of the fabric?
  - Does fabric show between rows of metal thread?
  - Are the plunged ends of the metal threads neat and without exposed core on the surface?
  - Are the corners turned sharply?

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## *Metal Thread Embroidery continued*

### *Metallic Kid*

- Does the use of the leather enhance the design and is it appropriate in the area where it is used?
- Does its color enhance the silk and/or metal threads used in the design?
- If visible stitches are used, are they of the correct length and spacing?
- Are the edges of the kid cut smoothly?
- If padding has been used, is it appropriate for the design area and is it completely covered by the leather kid?
- Is the colored coating free from nicks?

## Mixed Fiber

Mixed Fiber is embroidery that is worked on/with other fiber techniques – dyed fabric, weaving, knitting, crochet, quilting.

### *General*

- Does the use of the different fiber materials enhance the design?
- Are the fibers compatible?
- Are the techniques used worked appropriately?

# Mixed Media Work

Mixed Media is the use of embroidery (fiber) with a non-fiber medium (print, photograph, etc.). All media should be visible in the final work.

## *General*

- Do the mixed media materials enhance the unity of the design and the idea you seek to put forward?
- Are the mixed media used skillfully and correctly to produce archival quality art?
- If the mixed media materials are not part of the focal area, are they integrated into the design so that they do not detract from the intended focal point?
- Do the hard and soft qualities of the media blend or contrast successfully with fabric and thread to portray the intended message?
- Are attachments well secured?

## *Ground Fabric and Threads*

- If materials are attached with threads, is the attachment smooth, not puckered unless intended?
- Are stitches used to attach mixed media consistent, if intended?
- Is thread size compatible with attachments and ground fabric?
- Does thread color match or blend with attachments unless a contrast is intended?
- Are threads frayed due to dragging through rough attachments?

## *Finishing and Archival Considerations*

- Are the care and conservation aspects of the mixed media materials compatible with the final use of the design? Can you clean a wearable or usable item incorporating mixed media?
- Are there potential finishing problems such as framing items with mixed media that protrude?
- Are recyclables and found objects archival quality, if appropriate, for use with textiles?

## Mixed Technique

Mixed Technique is when two or more embroidery techniques are used in one piece.

### *General*

- Do the techniques used enhance the design?
- Is each technique correctly executed for the piece?

# Quiltmaking

Quilting is stitching two or more layers of cloth together with a batting or filling.

## *General*

- Are the threads and fabric appropriate to the use of the piece?
- Does the quilt measure the same width and length throughout the piece?

## *Quilting*

- Does the quilting design fit the space it is designed to fill?
- Is the amount of quilting appropriate for the type of batting chosen and for the intended use of the quilt?
- Are corners, angles and curves treated properly?
- Is the amount of quilting uniform over the entire quilt top?
- Is there enough quilting to hold the batting securely in place?
- Do all stitches go through all three layers of the quilt sandwich?
- Are all stitches and spaces consistent in size in both the front and the back?
- Are stitches straight and even?
- Is thread a compatible color?
- Is stitch tension smooth?
- Is there an absence of puckers, pleats or puffs?
- Are the beginnings and endings of the threads inconspicuous?
- Are all traces of the markings removed?

## *Piecing*

- Does the piecing lie flat, without puckers, puffs or stretched distortions?
- Are the pieces accurately cut and sewn?
- Is the grain consistent on the pieces throughout the quilt?
- Are all joinings smooth, without distortion?
- Are the points and corners of the pieces sharp and not cut off?
- Do curved pieces have a continuous smooth arc?
- Do all of the squares and rectangles have straight, even sides and sharp, 90° angles at the corners?
- Are the seams properly trimmed and pressed to one side of the seam line?
- Are the seams crossed with solid stitching with no holes visible?
- Is there minimal bulk at the joinings?
- Is the least noticeable color of thread used?
- Are knots unobtrusive?
- Are all marking lines hidden or removed?

Continued on the next page

## *Quiltmaking continued*

### *Appliqué*

#### *Edge Finishing*

- Are all raw edges hidden unless used as a design element?
- Are all visible raw edges covered with stitches to prevent fraying?
- Are edges smoothly turned under?
- Is the amount of fabric turned under around the edges appropriate for the weave of the fabric?
- Are curves smoothly turned?

#### *Stitches*

- Are stitches invisible unless they are part of the design?
- Are stitches tight, close, straight and even?
- Are decorative stitches, if used, correctly executed?

#### *Shapes*

- Are the shapes cut on an appropriate grain line?
- Are circles smooth and perfectly round?
- Are points sharp and crisp with no noticeable bulk?
- Are shapes free of distortion and stretch?
- Are the shapes appliquéd with thread the same color as the shape, unless another color has been chosen for design purposes?

#### *Background*

- Is the background fabric free from distortion?
- Does the background show through the applied pieces?

#### *Borders*

- Are seams unobtrusive if piecing was necessary?
- Are the borders on the grain?
- Are they consistent in width?
- Are the miters perfect, and do they lie flat?
- Are all joinings smooth, without distortion?
- Does the border design relate to the rest of the quilt?

### *Bindings*

- Do the binding colors and fabric complement or enhance the colors and fabrics in the quilt?
- Is the binding securely stitched on both front and back and is the stitching invisible?
- Are the backing, batting and top all firmly caught inside of the binding with no puckers or raw edges?

Continued on next page

*Quilting, Binding continued*

- Are the corners of the binding carefully made with a smooth transition from one side to the other?
- Is the binding smooth, without any stretch or ripple?
- Is the width of the binding even all around the quilt?
- Is the binding smoothly filled throughout, with no lumps or poorly filled areas?

# Silk Embroidery

Silk embroidery is the use of silk threads on a ground fabric to work designs in raised or other ornamental techniques.

## *General*

- Is the design concept suitable for silk embroidery?
- Is the shading well executed and appropriate?
- Are all transfer lines covered?

## *Materials*

- Is the fabric appropriate for the design?
- Is the thread used appropriate for the design and of a proper weight?
- Is there any puckering of the ground fabric from improper tensions used in the mounting of the fabric?
- If padding has been used, is it appropriate for the design area and covered by the silk?

## *Stitches*

- Does the stitch used within an area enhance the design?
- Is the size of the stitch appropriate as used within the design area?
- Is the stitch executed properly?
  - Does the directional flow of the stitch enhance the design area?
  - Are the edges of all stitched areas smooth?
  - Is the angle of the stitches well-maintained?
  - Is the proper tension used?
  - Are the stitch lengths maintained?
  - Do the stitches lie smoothly?

# Smocking

Smocking is manipulation of fabric into pleats that are held in place by stitches. The surface embroidery holds the gathered fabric in even folds or pleats.

## *General*

- Are the threads and fabrics appropriate?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?

## *Smocking Stitches*

- Is the stitch suitable to area where used?
- Are the stitches correctly worked?
- Are the use and placement of the stitches well balanced?
- Is there an even tension in the stitching?
- Do the stitches maintain elasticity in the smocked area?
- Are the beginnings and endings of the threads inconspicuous and strong?
- Is the thread carried on the back in such a way that the smocking retains its ability to stretch?

## *Construction of Garment/ Article*

- Do the construction techniques used for the article show good craftsmanship?
- Are all pleats consistent in size?

# Surface Embroidery

Surface embroidery is any embroidery in which the stitches do not follow the grid of the fabric. It usually refers to free embroidery as opposed to counted thread work. It can be done on either a solidly woven fabric or an open-weave fabric such as linen, Aida or canvas. Included as separate entries are Crewel Embroidery, Metal Thread Embroidery, Silk Embroidery, Stumpwork/Raised Work, and some types of Whitework.

## *General*

- Is the finished embroidery suitable or appropriate for its intended use?
- Are the fabrics and threads of suitable size for the design and for the stitches?
- Are the colors well blended and obvious bands of color avoided, except where desired by design?
- Does the shading follow pleasing contours?
- Is the shading effective and suitable for the purpose?
- Are the outlines covered?

## *Stitches*

- Are the stitches executed properly and used in the right places to enhance the design?
- Is the stitch suitable to area where used?
- Is the stitch clearly recognizable?
- Are the stitches consistent in size, where this is appropriate?
- Is the proper tension maintained?
- Is the stitch direction appropriate to motif shape?
- Are the edges of the motifs smooth?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Are the beginnings and endings of the threads inconspicuous on the surface?
- Are the threads started and ended correctly on the reverse side?
- Were ridges or dimples in stitching avoided?
- Are thread carryovers invisible on the front of the fabric?

## *Fabric*

- Is the fabric appropriate for the type of needlework?
- Is the fabric free of puckering, wrinkles or warping caused by the stitching?
- Is the fabric free of bleeding from the ribbons or threads used?

## *Brazilian Embroidery*

Brazilian Embroidery is dimensional embroidery utilizing rayon threads of varying weights and color combinations. It was first produced in Brazil.

- Is the design stitched primarily with rayon thread?
- Does the design have dimensional elements made with the thread and stitches (as opposed to padded bases or wired elements)?

Continued on the next page

### *Surface Embroidery, Brazilian Embroidery continued*

- Is the appropriate size thread used for the design and stitch?
- Is the proper twist of the thread maintained through the stitch? Brazilian rayon thread is a Z-twist thread and stitches must be made “backwards” in order to maintain the twist.
- Is the thread started and finished with the proper style knot?

### *Ethnic Embroidery*

Ethnic embroidery includes, but is not limited to, chikan, shisha, Schwalm, colcha, Mountmellick Casalguidi.

- Does the overall needlework reflect the tradition of the chosen style?
- Do the threads and ground fabric reflect the tradition of the chosen style?
- Is the color appropriate for the chosen style?

### *Silk Ribbon Embroidery*

Embroidery using silk ribbon in widths from 2 mm to 13 mm as thread for surface embroidery stitches.

- Is the appropriate size ribbon used for the design and stitch?
- Is the ribbon started with the proper style knot?
- Are the ribbon edges crisp, not showing fraying or wear from overuse or the wrong sized needle?
- Is the fabric free of displaced threads caused by the removal of stitches or the stitches used?

## Stumpwork/Raised Work

Stumpwork is a contemporary term for high-relief silk and metal thread embroidery primarily of the 17th century, characterized by certain motifs and conventions.

### *General*

- Are the stitches executed properly and used where they are the most effective?
- Is the background fabric suitable?
- Is all evidence of design lines removed?
- Are proper threads used?
- Are the mechanics (raised, detached and padded parts) handled properly?
- Are the figures properly padded?

# Whitework

Whitework is all embroidery which is colorless and worked with white, or unbleached cotton, or linen thread.

## *Broderie Anglaise and Ayrshire Embroidery*

Broderie Anglaise is a whitework technique using eyelet embroidery. Ayrshire is a form of whitework characterized by flower designs of firmly padded satin stitch and open work filled with fine needlelace.

- Are the fabrics and threads suitable for the design and for the stitches?
- Are the stitches correctly worked?
- Are all stitches consistent in size?
- Is an even tension maintained?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Are the endings and beginnings of the threads inconspicuous?
- Are the edges of the cut areas neatly finished?
- Is the cutting done accurately and neatly?
- Are the edges of the motifs smooth?
- Are the fillings appropriate for the piece?
- Are the fillings worked correctly?
- Are the embellishing stitches appropriate for the piece?
- Are the embellishing stitches correctly worked?

## *Cut Work*

Cutwork is embroidery in which the ground fabric is cut away.

- Are the fabrics and threads suitable for the design and for the stitches?
- Are the stitches correctly worked?
- Are the stitches consistent in size?
- Is the proper tension maintained?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Are ridges or dimples in stitching avoided?
- Is the stitch direction appropriate to motif shape?
- Are the edges of the motifs smooth?
- Are the tie-off and tie-on threads inconspicuous?
- Is the cutting done accurately and neatly?
- Are the edges of the cut areas neatly finished?
- Are the fillings appropriate for the piece?
- Are the fillings worked correctly?

Continued on the next page

## *Whitework continued*

### *Monogramming*

Monogramming is the use of the alphabet as the focal point of whitework embroidery.

- Are the fabrics and threads suitable for the design and for the stitches?
- Are the stitches correctly worked?
- Are all stitches consistent in size?
- Is the proper tension maintained?
- Is the stitch direction appropriate to motif shape?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Are the edges of the motifs smooth?
- Are ridges or dimples in stitching avoided?
- Are the tie-off and tie-on threads inconspicuous?

### *Shadow Work*

Shadow work is a type of embroidery stitched on the underside of a transparent fabric, producing an opaque design on the right side.

- Are the fabrics and thread suitable for the design and for the stitches?
- Are the stitches correctly worked?
- Is the stitch clearly recognizable?
- Are the stitches consistent in size?
- Is the proper tension maintained?
- Is the twist of the thread maintained?
- Is the stitch direction appropriate to motif shape?
- Are the edges of the motifs smooth?
- Are ridges or dimples in stitching avoided?
- Are the tie-off and tie-on threads inconspicuous?
- Are there any gaps in the stitches caused by incorrect joining of adjacent areas where they merge?

## Conclusion

When undertaking a needlework project, you owe it to yourself to produce the best work possible. By reviewing these points with each project you can improve the quality of your work. Soon you will automatically look with a critical eye and it will only be necessary to refer to the list when you are undertaking a new technique.

After becoming comfortable with these judgments, you may wish to study some of the various topics in greater depth in order to further improve your stitching techniques and your ability to make good design and color choices. Classes with expert teachers, reading high quality instruction books and taking group or individual correspondence courses are good ways of learning the finer points about a technique. Regardless of the method you use for further study, nothing will ever replace the critical eye you develop by looking at your work with a questioning attitude.

This current work is based on *Judging Your Own Work* by Pat Grappe issued in 1991. I wish to acknowledge and thank Pat and the Master Craftsmen chairmen who worked with her to produce that document. I would like to thank the current Master Craftsmen chairmen and it is with their assistance that this retitled edition has been expanded and updated. Thanks also goes to the Pajarito Chapter proofreaders who catch my typing errors.

Carole Rinard  
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