

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN JUDGING YOUR OWN WORK OR WHEN WRITING A CRITIQUE**

### **DESIGN**

1. Is there a center of interest? Emphasis?
2. Is there directed eye movement throughout? Movement?
3. Does the direction of lines support the basic shape of the piece?
4. Is there good use of positive and negative space?
5. Does the design have harmony or a feeling of balance?
6. Does it show originality and imagination?
7. Does the design accomplish the "goal" of the piece?
8. Is it exciting, innovative, distinctive?

### **COLOR**

1. Does color add strength to the entire piece?
2. Does the color enhance the design and support the goal effectively?
3. Are there valid placements of the colors?
4. Are the proportion of hues interesting?
5. Have the values been used to support the design?
6. Is there unity, contrast, and balance?

### **EXECUTION**

1. Are the stitches appropriate for the design?
2. Do the stitches draw attention away from the design?
3. Are there distracting areas of stitches?
4. Does the piece show correct knowledge of stitch technique?
5. Is the tension throughout the piece even?

### **SUITABILITY OF MATERIALS**

1. Are the materials appropriate to the design?
2. Are the materials used expressively or imaginatively?
3. Are the weight of the threads suitable for the background fabric?
4. Are the materials well suited to the function of the object?
5. Are the fabrics, threads, and any other attachments appropriate to each other?

### **FINISHING AND MOUNTING**

1. Is the work clean? Is it mounted well? Are puckers and wrinkles avoided?
2. Are the initials and date handled well?
3. Is the finishing/mounting suitable to the function of the object?
4. Has the piece and mounting (frame, mat, etc.) become a unified whole?
5. If the piece is free-hanging, is the interlining properly worked so that the piece hangs correctly?
6. If the tags are used to support the piece from a pole, does the piece hang evenly without sagging?

**DISTINCTION:** Does the work portray excellence and distinction?

## IMPROVING ONES WORK

The Embroiderers' Guild of America, Inc. is an organization dedicated to the preservation of and education in needlework. As such, it places a great deal of emphasis on the acquiring of technical skill. Our chapters sponsor workshops and lectures, our regions hold exhibitions and seminars, and the national organization promotes correspondence courses, library, collection, and advanced study options, all with the goal of broadening our needlework knowledge.

Occasionally, a program is presented on finishing and mounting needlework, but, by and large, this type of program represents only 1% with technique plus design being the other 99%. It should be pointed out, however, that a judge approaches each piece as an entire object - with definite expectations of the finishing and presentation of the piece. The occasion may arise where two of the same design are entered in the exhibit and are judged against each other. When that happens, all things being equal (in the needlework skill category), the judge's attention is drawn to the presentation of each piece.

A design stitched upon even weave fabric or canvas and placed within a square or rectangular frame is expected to be mounted with the threads absolutely in line with the edges of the frame. There are several methods of achieving this absolute alignment.

### Lacing Through the Foam Core Method With a Mat and a Frame

1. On a piece of foam core mounting board, with a pencil draw the inner edges of the selected mat. The utmost care must be taken that the drawn lines are parallel to the edges of the foam core. The foam core should be larger than the finished frame size will be.
2. Draw another set of lines one inch larger all around the "mat opening."
3. Using a sewing machine without thread and the longest sewing stitch, feed the foam core through the sewing machine, stitching on the outer lines. Again, take care that the lines are straight and parallel to the edges of the foam core. (Note: This step may also be done manually with an awl or extra large needle.)
4. Place the stitched piece of linen or canvas, carefully centered within the punched lines, on top of the foam core and sew to the foam core through the punched holes. Care must be taken to stitch between the same set of linen/canvas threads, keeping the stitched piece straight. Repeat for all four sides, keeping the piece flat and smooth.
5. When the mat is placed on top of the mounted piece, the edges of the mat should show straight fabric lines at all four sides. The foam core can then be marked and cut to a size to fit within the finished frame.

## Lacing Through the Foam Core Method Without a Mat or Frame

1. This method is used when a stitched piece with a finished edge is to be mounted so that the edge shows. Draw lines  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch smaller than the finished stitched piece.
2. Using a sewing machine without thread and the longest sewing stitch, feed the foam core through the sewing machine, stitching on the pencil lines. Take care that the lines are straight and absolutely parallel to the edges of the foam core. This step may be done manually with an awl or very large needle.
3. Cover the foam core with a fabric that complements the stitched piece, taking care that the cover fabric does not obscure the holes on the back of the foam core.
4. Place the stitched piece on top of the cover fabric, carefully centering it. Sew from the back of the foam core, through the cover fabric, through the stitched piece, and back down through all layers to the back. Take care to stitch between the same set of linen/canvas threads, keeping the stitched piece straight, flat and smooth. Repeat for all four sides.

## Traveling Shadows

What you do on the back of your work can show through to the front of the work. When finishing a thread, sometimes the stitcher does not cut the thread close enough to the fabric, leaving a fuzzy tail. When stitching mottos, alphabets, or other words, the stitcher travels from one letter to the other, causing shadows where the thread is stretched between the two points. The judge notices such tails and traveling shadows and deducts points.

There is a simple and easy solution to this situation. By placing a dark piece of fabric or paper behind the stitching, the traveling threads will be obscured or absorbed and not as easily seen from the front.

## Mounting a Very Small Piece of Stitchery Within a Large Frame Or with Multiple Pictures Under the Same Mat

If you wish to frame several pieces under the same mat, such as photographs plus stitchery, you may use the "drop out" mount method.

Determine the placement of the stitched piece. Have a mat opening cut to the desired size. Mark the mat opening on the over-large foam core. Mark lines at least one inch bigger on all four sides than the mat opening and cut through these lines, creating a "drop out" piece of foam core. Mark the front and back of both pieces of foam core. Push out this piece of foam core and securely lace the stitched piece over this "drop out." You can then push it back into the larger "frame" of foam core, matching the front/back and top/bottom, so that it fits correctly.

After placement of the stitchery, photographs can be dry-mounted to the foam core and a multi-opening mat placed over. Trace around the excess foam core and trim to fit. The piece can then be framed.

<#> NATIONAL EXHIBIT

5-Point System

JUROR SCORE SHEET

Entry # \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

The points awarded in a 5-point system are:

5 points: Exciting, innovative, distinctive, splendid, a revelation. This is ART! Must be included in the exhibit.

4 points: Good. Some outstanding qualities. Should be included in the exhibit.

3 points: Competent but not outstanding. No special distinction. Fence sitting score is often not used.

2 points: Has some merit but not very much. Possibly not worthy of being included in the exhibit.

1 point: Questionable. Not worthy of inclusion in the exhibit.

0 points: No merit, not acceptable for exhibit.

A total of 15 points, or as few as 0-3 points, is possible for each piece if three jurors are employed.

This basic scoring system can be readily doubled to 10 points if the jurors prefer to have more scope.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

**APPENDIX C**  
**Tally Sheet for Original Work Based on 40 Points**  
**(sample)**

**40-Point System**

Entry # \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

SCORE

**OVERALL DESIGN AND TOTAL IMPACT (1-10 points)**  
Is design fresh, imaginative, pleasing, well-balanced, or is it trite, stale?  
COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**COLOR (1-10 points)**  
Is the color and/or combination of colors pleasing or is the effect disturbing or inharmonious?  
COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**WORKMANSHIP (1 - 10 points)**  
Do the stitches show good technique or have they been poorly executed?  
COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUITABILITY OF MATERIALS (1 - 5 points)**  
Are the fabrics, threads and stitches suited to each other? Are the materials suited to the design and purpose of the piece?  
COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINISHING AND MOUNTING (1 - 5 points)**  
Is the presentation of the piece appropriate and well done? Does the finishing enhance the embroidery or does it detract or overpower it?  
COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL COMMENT:

# Another 40-Point System

## EGA JUDGING Assessment Form

**Event:**

**Theme**

**Identifier:** \_\_\_\_ number

**Score** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Complete Submission of Required Materials and paperwork: if complete- advance to assessment

Scoring: 1= present to 5= extraordinary

**Aesthetic Quality:** design/composition esthetic Design is a core design principle that defines a design's unity in visual terms. Aesthetic Design includes the relationships with the Elements and Principles of Design, such as balance, color repetition, pattern scale, shape and value.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Application of materials:** Materials and their use in the composition support the design, and concept

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Complexity:** difficulty in execution

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Concept:** interpretation and clarity of thought or theme. Cohesive Artist Statement or reflection of theme and the relationship to the Design/Execution.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Form:** The intention of the final piece is clear and supported by the design and total sum of materials

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Innovation:** successful original or adaptation, or clever twist

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Professional Quality:** neatness, cleanliness, and skill

0 1 2 3 4 5

**Use of the Needle**

0 1=10% 2=25% 3=50% 4=75% 5=100%

Comments:

Judge \_\_\_\_\_

## Tally Sheet for Golden Needle Awards

**Artist Statement (1-15 points)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Design and total impact (1-15 points)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Color (1-5 points)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Workmanship (1-5 points)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Suitability of materials (1-5 points)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Finishing and Mounting (1-5 points)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Total**

\_\_\_\_\_

### Evaluation sheet for Pilling Award

How it looks: Artistic Merit – 40%

#### Design

- Visual impact
- Organization of design
- Appropriate materials
- Appropriate use of embellishments

#### Color

- Colors well chosen for design
- Use of color/value

#### Workmanship

- Appropriate for design
- Nothing visible on front that should not be (bulges from knots, carried threads, etc.)

#### Finishing

- Clean, free from hairs, debris, loose threads, odors
- Finishing suitable for design

How the stitcher went "Outside the box" – 60%

- From artists statement an explanation of how the "stitcher stretched themselves...to be creative, to experiment, to go beyond their comfort zone by thinking "outside the box." Did they take the traditional and turn it inside out using stitches and materials in an unusual and modern way; did they stretch themselves by doing original work that they had not done before; how did they go "outside the box"?