

Gilding the Needle

The Newsletter of

The Cataraqui Guild of Needle Arts

"A few stitches today – an heirloom tomorrow"

We meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, at St. John's Anglican Church in
Portsmouth. Come join us!

President's Message

The New Year's Celebrations have come and gone. The snow has come and gone and come and gone. It's been a very unusual winter with El Nino. Great Lake Ontario has not frozen, not even a little. As a result, when the temperature drops, and the wind races across the Lake, it picks up moisture and turns it into ... snow squalls! They have appeared suddenly and furiously. Ah, but spring is almost here. The Ground Hogs have told us so.

Talking about crazy, how's your Crazy Quilt Block coming? We've had lots of lessons on different stitches. Many thanks to Diane R, Diane D, and Anjali for sharing their knowledge with us. At our last meeting for Crazy stitches, Beth A provided us with decorative motifs to add that special touch to our pieces.

Hardanger is next. This is quite a change from surface stitching. But it is fun in its own way, provided you can count to four! Mary Lou W will be on her way from

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2023 - 24**

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Vice-President: Anjali
Past President: Diane D.
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Treasurer: Lyn M.

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Katherine/Elizabeth/Susanne
Communications: Beth M.
Library: Karen/Beth M.
Hospitality:
Nancy/Janet/Francine
Membership: Lynn P.
Special Events: Anjali/Ellen

Ottawa to help us with the cutting. Honestly, it is fun! Relax and enjoy! Diane D, maybe Kristeen, and Donna will be helping you with some of these Norwegian stitches. I can hardly wait. And we are progressing with our samplers. The Cosmos focus group is just getting under way. I hear it's out of this world!

Don't forget to visit the 1000 Islands History Museum to see their "From Away" exhibit. Our pieces have made a bit of a splash. We are also featured on the front page of the EAC/ACB website. Be sure to take a look.

We will be exhibiting our embroidery at the Lansdowne Textiles Festival on Saturday, June 1. Be sure to watch for the sheet to sign up your pieces including the title and technique used for the tag. It's sure to be fun to visit Lansdowne on the other side of Gananoque and a little bit north. Our sister group, the "Lupins and Lacemakers" will also be there to show their latest pieces of lace. I hope you will participate and then come on over to help at our booth and visit the vendors. Who knows what you will find? Let's go stitch and finish our pieces!

Donna



In Memoriam: Marg Henshaw

The Cataraqui Guild of Needle Arts (CGNA) has lost a great embroiderer. Margaret Henshaw passed away on January 14th, after suffering a massive stroke on New Year's Day. Marg has been a member of CGNA since 2002 when it was first formed. She was a proud left-handed embroiderer and willing to help other lefties any way she could. Marg had been a legal secretary during her working days and was able to answer any "legal" questions that came our way. She was our Treasurer several times, looked after Membership, and was Co-Leader for the 2009 Seminar. She always was willing to help where she could.



She was also active with the Kingston Heirloom Quilters, the Limestone Quilters Guild, and the board of the Odessa Fair. She won many first prizes for her quilts.

Marg participated in the making of the "Quilt of Belonging" and was one of the main organizers responsible for bringing the "Quilt of Belonging" to Kingston in 2016. CGNA members were critical in making that show a hit.

And so it is with great sadness that we say goodbye to our fellow embroiderer and friend, Marg. She will be missed.

May she rest in peace.



Above: Marg's hardanger runner.



Marg's crewel piece



Right: Close-up, showing detail.



She quite deservedly looks pleased with her blackwork!

December Party Time!!

After the Covid years with lockdowns, masks, and isolating, CGNA members were delighted to be able to have a real year-end party this year. Indeed, we were in such a good mood that the Town Hall meeting was exceptionally amicable and productive – we were itching to get on to the fun stuff!

Hospitality asked everyone to bring a small sampling of their holiday baking – a great way to share food without creating a lot of work or chaos. The goodies were varied and just as yummy as bakery goods – and so much more fun. Nancy complimented Beth M. on her almond bars – her first attempt at gluten-free baking, Kristeen brought in enough maple and chocolate fudge for everyone to have a taste, and Diane R.'s rice krispie rolls—a throwback to the '70's – were so popular that we insisted on having the recipe (see Page 6).

Ros donated a pair of the mitts she has been making by hand from re-cycled blankets to be raffled. The happy winner was Lyn M.



The highlight of the morning was the ornament exchange. Each participant brought in a hand-stitched ornament and tucked it into a paper bag. But, how to distribute those bags? Katherine stood us in a circle, each of us holding a paper bag but not knowing which ornament it contained. Then, as she read a “story” she had composed, we passed those bags around, to the left, to the right, to the right, and back again, in accordance with Katherine’s instructions to pass the bags to the left each time she said the word “left” and to the right each time she said “right”.



A selection of the ornaments, with everything from quilting to cross-stitch to bobbin lace

Can you believe that people found this... amusing? Giggles ensued. At the end, each member got to open the bag she was holding and take home the ornament inside. But not before asking around to find out who made each one! Sometimes, one could guess – mine was finished so nicely that it had to have been made by a quilter (and she



eventually confessed). Thank you, Katherine, for organizing the game and making the day so much fun.

In the afternoon, we calmed down enough to pay attention as Norma took the floor and told us about her adventures in weaving. Please read Tricia's report of Norma's presentation (page 7).

And so the old year ended...on a high note, for sure.

Humbug!

While virtually everyone in guild has the skills to stitch an ornament in some style or other, many of us struggle with the finishing. I recently discovered a set of tutorials by Jean Farish, a reputable American teacher and designer. She is a clear, calm instructor and her videos are packed with useful information. Here's the link to her instructions for making a humbug, a peculiar 3-dimensional object that would certainly work for an ornament:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=db9Fhvp0eLg>

Maybe for next year????



Spring-Cleaning your Stash?

Diane R. teaches needle-and-thread skills to a group of young girls at the Amherstview Community Centre on Saturdays. These kids would love to have your leftover bits and pieces of thread, fabric and notions! They don't care about the brand of floss or the distinction between "white" and "antique white". Please consider donating your "junk" – it might well be someone's "treasure".

Holiday Stitch-In



On December 29, Katherine opened her home to CGNA members for a holiday stitch-in. Donna, Lynn, Lyn, Norma, and Diane D. had a lovely day. Donna seems to be getting her goldwork finished, but Norma may have the more typical idea of what a stitch-in is about. Thanks, Katherine!

Cocoa Krispie Roll

(A Rice Krispies Recipe from the 70's)

Diane R.

Ingredients

Base:

- 3/4 cup corn syrup
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup peanut butter - smooth or chunky
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 4 1/2 cups Rice Krispies

Icing:

- 1/3 cup butter
- 3 Tbsp. milk
- 1 1/2 cups icing sugar
- 2/3 cup cocoa

Method

- In a large saucepan, mix corn syrup and sugar together. Cook over medium heat until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture begins to bubble. Remove from heat. Blend in peanut butter and butter. Add Rice Krispies and mix until well-coated.
- Press evenly into a well-buttered, 15 x 10 x 3/4" jelly roll pan (lightly butter fingers when mixture begins to stick to them). Put in fridge to cool slightly while making icing
- Sift together the icing sugar and cocoa.
- In a small saucepan on low heat, melt the butter with the milk. Blend in the icing sugar/cocoa mixture until well-combined.
- Spread on chilled base
- Roll from the long side, molding as you go, into a 15" long roll. Wrap in waxed paper and refrigerate for 30 minutes
- Slice into 1/2" cookies.



Norma Rosier
CGNA's Featured Speaker, December
2023
Tricia

It has been noted that so much of our lives are influenced by the unplanned and the unexpected. It may have been serendipity or perhaps simply luck that we have Norma Rosier in our midst. Norma was kind enough to be our presenter in December and talk to us about her lovely tapestry weavings.

She connected the dots of her seemingly unplanned life from Yorkshire, England to Kingston, Ontario via the Outer Hebrides in Scotland. Though she originally became a chemist, her passion has always been in the creative field and apparently the only thing she planned in life was to be a weaver. Seven years training, lots of teaching, and many displays later lead her to our doorstep.

Two beautiful tapestries were displayed for her presentation. She explained how she creates her designs, not by tracing onto the weft or by using a drawn guide, called a cartoon, but simply by mapping out a design with measurements and simple details to help her along the way. She said trees would never be found in any of her weavings and we totally understood why when she described the process of colours meeting and getting them to join seamlessly.



I was totally enamored with the use of blues in her tapestry of mountains and sea. This was part of a triptych she completed, and I found a picture of the entire piece on the internet. Absolutely beautiful and so peaceful looking.

There was much interest and many questions from members both during and following her presentation. Could this be a future workshop for the guild? – but on a smaller scale please!



Left: Norma brought this piece along and invited us to inspect both front and back – a great way to learn about constructing patterns in weaving.

Right: This tapestry, which hangs in the Tett Centre, showcases Norma's amazing ability to depict patterns of light on land, sky, and water.



Three Online Presentations

Kristeen



On January 24, I listened to a fascinating free discussion by the Royal School of Needlework (RSN) about their Stitch Bank: <https://rsnstitchbank.org> RSN has these talks or discussions about every two weeks. Some are free, some are not. Once I got my times straightened out, I realized that the ones that start at 7 p.m. in the UK start in Eastern Ontario at 2 p.m. – not in the middle of the night as I originally thought.

The discussion about the stitch bank included five people plus the principal of RSN. The stitch bank was initiated for RSN's 150th anniversary. Anyone can access it for free. It currently includes 375 stitches with another 25 stitches to be added each quarter, with the next addition in March. RSN does not know how many different stitches there are in the world. Some that are considered different stitches actually turn out to be variations of a stitch already listed. Each stitch on the stitch wall (index) in the bank has information about what embroidery technique it might be used for, its uses within that technique, and its structure. Also, some alternate names are given. Most importantly from my perspective, there is an icon that switches each stitch to diagrams for left-handed people. For designers and students, it is possible to set up an account within the stitch bank of your frequently used stitches. It was explained that it might be several years before the stitches you see on an object could be identified from a photo.

One of the people on the discussion panel is involved with another new RSN project. The RSN is digitizing some of the RSN's archive items. Sometime in April this project will release computer pictures and a list of every stitch for approximately 100 archival items. Not all stitches mentioned in these reports will be on the stitch wall as soon as the items are released, but all will eventually be added.

Additionally it was mentioned in the discussion that a book will soon be released with 200 core embroidery stitches included and another book later on with 100 more unusual stitches.

Upcoming Live Talks:

RSN has two live talks scheduled in March: (1) Surprising Objects from the RSN collection, and (2) Forensic Fashion.

It is also possible to listen to some former talks (On Demand). According to the website we must get special permission should we want to listen to any of these talks as a group.



The second talk (also free) that I listened to within the same week was sponsored by Embroiderers' Association of Canada (EAC/ACB). Lianne van Leyen talked about some of her ragamuffin samplers. There were approximately 110 EAC/ACB members registered for this interesting talk. Lianne is a member of our guild and owns **1897 Schoolhouse Samplers**.

She owns about 350 samplers that, while not of museum quality, are well-loved. She has used these samplers to create several patterns. Her talk started with looking at very old samplers, done on fine material. As she moved closer to the present day, the samplers were created by schoolgirls as an educational tool and possibly as work samplers. Some of the very fine stitching was done on 60-count material. Because she uses these samplers for designing, they are not all mounted and so we were able to see the backs and also see how fine the material was.

Lianne answered lots of detailed questions from the participants and so was unable to show us most of her Canadian collection. Another person will be arranging these talks in 2024/25 but it was suggested that Lianne be invited back to continue her talk.

I had a very enjoyable educational week.

The third presentation was also one presented in the EAC/ACB Speaker Series. Their February presenter was Susan Purney Mark, a textile artist from Pender Island, British Columbia. Eighty-nine members registered to listen to this talk. Susan is teaching at the EAC/ACB Seminar (4-day class "Cloth to Codex") this year. The first part of her talk was on her visit to Iceland (population 650,000) as an artist-in-residence; the second part was about her own work.

I personally found the first part of her talk more interesting than the second half. The first section was about Iceland and also about residency. In her case, she was about four hours by bus from the capital of Iceland at a school for girls built in the 1920's which later became a textile centre and community centre. An artist's residency is a time away from routine, a time to reflect, research or produce and a time to explore, experiment and experience. It is a good way to learn more about a country than the usual tourist learns. She visited a sheep farm and although the sheep are mainly raised for food they also are sheared for their wool, some of which is exported to Great Britain and Italy. We were told that in Iceland one does not wear shoes in a home but rather slippers with knitted insoles. Wools for knitting are usually dyed with natural dyes, resulting in subdued colours. She also visited a fish tannery. Fish skins are usually used for fashionable clothing. The same tannery also tans deer, seals, sharks and whales. She also saw some Icelandic horses. If these horses are removed from Iceland they can never come back.

The second part of her talk was mainly about her own work. At the textile centre, she was making fabric books (bookbinding). It was interesting to see her work. At this centre, the artists were required to bring all their supplies with them and also to take home all their supplies and projects. She admitted that she brought way too many supplies with her. To see more of Susan's work please visit her website at <http://www.susanpm.com>. Susan also teaches online classes.

It is not possible to listen to the EAC/ACB talks at a later date.

Upcoming Events (EAC/ACB):

March 16. Margaret Kinsey will speak on Japanese embroidery. Registration is now open.

April 6. EAC/ACB Annual General Meeting (one hour via Zoom). Note: If a quorum of members is not registered, the meeting will be rescheduled.

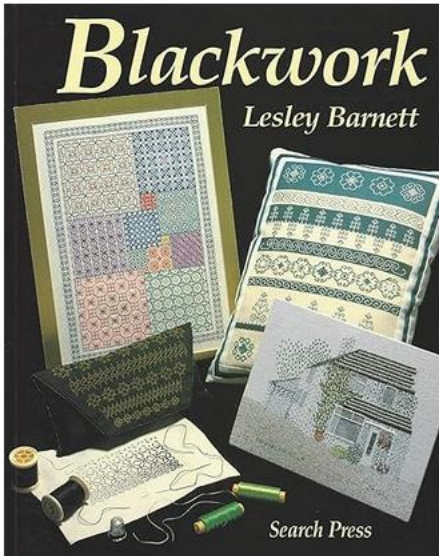
April 20. Youngman Lee will speak on Bojagi (Korean wrapping cloths). Registration now open.

May 4. Karen Selk will speak on wild silk. Registration opens Apr 1.

Book Review:

***Blackwork* by Lesley Barnett**

Nancy



The introduction to this book is a one-page history of blackwork, going back to the sixteenth century. At that time, blackwork designs were used only on collars and cuffs. The patterns and ideas changed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Patterns now involved scrolling and floral designs and were used both on clothing and on household furnishings. Blackwork today has become very free in style with many creative ideas. Modern designs often use different coloured threads, with gold and silver threads adding a nice touch to many designs.

The first chapter is on designs. A simple source of inspiration for a design would be plant leaves. Barnett explains how to transfer a leaf design to your embroidery work. Photographs, postcards and buildings are some picture ideas as you go forward. She tells us embroiderers to think of blackwork as shapes and not lines and discusses how to work with contrast. She describes the different materials used in transferring a design and has pictures showing transferring a design to fabric. She explains how to measure your design to fit the material and how to enlarge or reduce a design. This is an excellent chapter with lots of information about working with blackwork.

Next is a chapter on materials and equipment, explaining what material works best for blackwork and how to choose needle size. The thread should be easy for counting. Your needle should go through the material easily. There is information on preparing your material for embroidery. There is a picture showing how increasing the number of threads used makes the pattern darker, so that one can shade an image.

There are numerous pages illustrating different blackwork stitch patterns. Blackwork stitches (double running, a.k.a. Holbein stitches) can be worked horizontally, vertically or diagonally. There are some pictures of blackwork samplers in this book. The author only gives you the size of material needed, not directions for making these samplers. The good thing is that there are pages of sample stitches which I am sure are in her samplers.

There is a chapter on using non-evenweave fabrics for those inclined to tackle this kind of project.

Regardless of whether or not one has a bit of embroidery experience, this book will give you ideas and enough information to work the blackwork embroidery patterns included.

Show-and-Share



Top Row: Three Firsts! Ros was first to complete the goldwork from Lorna's fall workshop, Norma was the first to complete her crazy quilt project, and Leola was the first from the focus group to finish her sampler.

Middle Row: Kim and her Bayeux Horse, Leola's "An Open Heart" (Drawn Thread), with close-up of detail.

Bottom Row: Lynn with "Baby Got Backstitch" (Heartstring Samplery), Eileen with her crazy patch piece.

Focussing on a Sampler

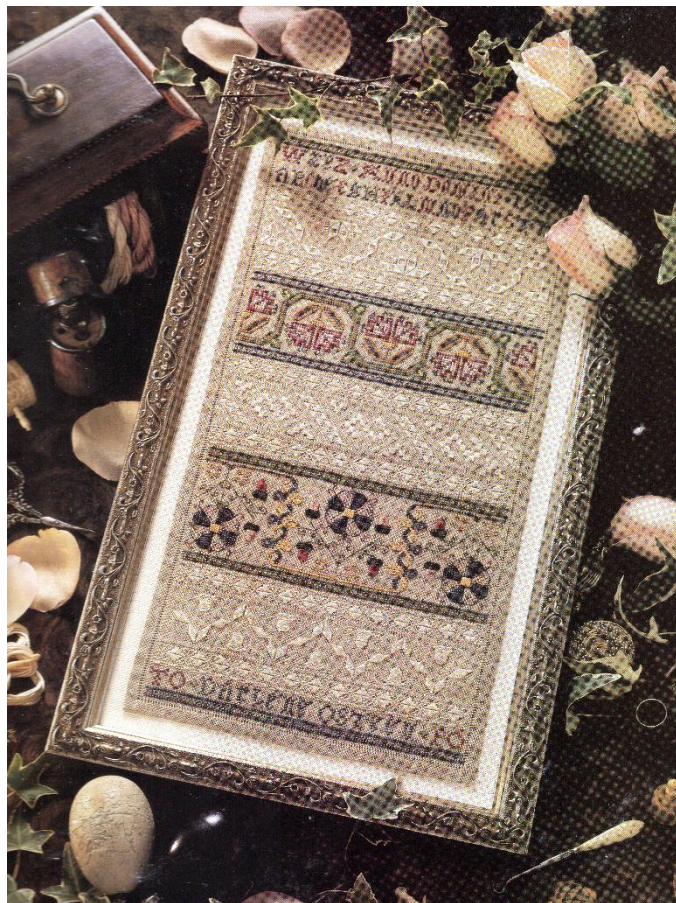
Beth M.

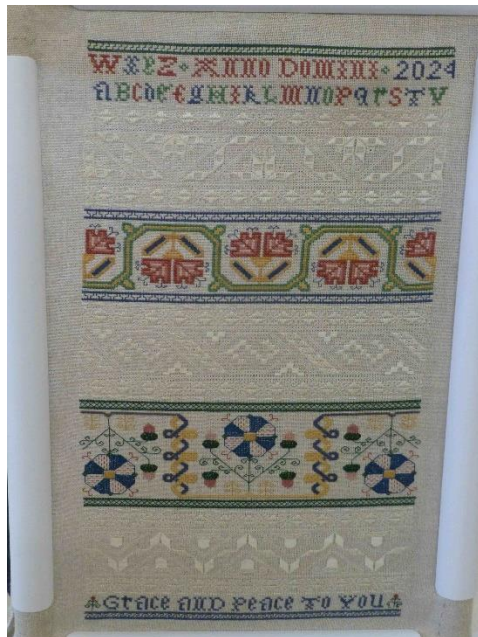
At CGNA, we've looked at samplers frequently over the last few years. Our local expert is Lianne, who has an inspiring collection of antique samplers and has generated and published charts defining several of them. The market in sampler patterns features not only such reproduction samplers, but also artistic designs in the style of samplers – band samplers, spot samplers, samplers with alphabets, samplers with varied stitches, and so forth.

The sampler which caught my eye, and which motivated our focus group on samplers, was “Our English Heritage Sampler”, published in **The Proper Stitch**, by Darlene O'Steen. O'Steen was well-known in stitching circles as both a designer and a teacher; her company, **The Needle's Prayse**, published many charts for samplers which incorporated stitches and styles from the 17th and 18th centuries. Naively, I started out just thinking I'd found an appealing chart. I've come to understand that this project is quite different from the commercial charts that I usually indulge in.

Early samplers were the vehicle by which young girls practised needlework skills. The first stitch in the “English Heritage Sampler” is double back-stitch, a stitch that was new to me but which I acquired some skill with by the end of the row. Then comes double back-stitch with an embellishment of Holbein stitch. A few bands later there is alternating double back-stitch, a simple variation on my old friend, double back-stitch, but one which I would have found intimidating if I hadn't done the preceding rows. And, so, I began to understand the concept of sampler as a learning device.

Guild members all know that learning is easier with stitching friends to guide one. It was good to share opinions about the count and fibre content of the ground fabric, to see different choices of thread colours, and to debate aspects of design. Although most of us are adept at following stitch diagrams, having someone around who is familiar with a new stitch – or just experienced with figuring out new stitches – is helpful and encouraging. So, thank you, Leola! And the converse has also occurred: At one point, it was Nancy, one of our less experienced cross-stitchers and not so set in her stitching habits, who was quite fearless in attempting a new technique – she just followed the instructions!





Leola's completed English Heritage Sampler

A diagram – up in this hole, down in that one – provides only the rudiments for “learning” a stitch. Double back-stitch is best done with a sewing motion, and the sewing motion meant discarding the hoop. The tag ends of threads are woven, not into the back of the work, but into the front, where they are actually less visible. Oh, and, be careful to delay the weaving until the next section is stitched so that the woven end is not pulling backwards into existing stitches, thereby distorting the general flow of the stitch, but forwards, so that the join is invisible. Such niceties take time; they make one slow down and appreciate what one is doing.

For Leola, this project was well within her existing stitching skills. She has the piece finished, and her stitching is exquisite! She is now inspired to look at other designs by O'Steen, and has acquired the chart for the whitework sampler.

For me, the goal of stitching this sampler has stopped being to complete the sampler. After all, I don't have a space on a wall planned for it. Rather, my goal is partly to learn new stitches, and, primarily, to improve stitching technique. At the end of a stitching session, I measure success not in terms of what I got done, but what I have become more comfortable doing. Improvement is frequently visible. I know that I could produce a neater piece of work if I subbed in evenweave fabric and cotton floss for the prescribed linen and silk – but, my reason for stitching this sampler was to practise working with silk on linen. It does not matter whether or not I ever finish this sampler; it has already served its purpose.

Focus Group - Cosmos

Anjali

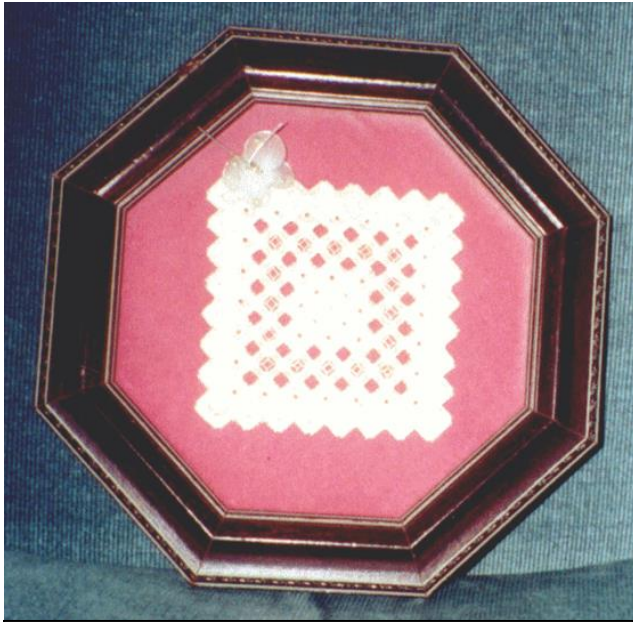


In this focus group we are attempting to explore the Cosmos with embroidery. An interesting discussion of ideas, colours and type of stitches led us all in different directions. A number of techniques will be used, including the stitches taught during this year's learn-a-stitch. I'm excited to see the pieces that come out of this challenge and looking forward to seeing the finished works at the June meeting. (Attached picture shows a sample Cosmos embroidery by Fatima Fazel, copied from the internet.)

Both Focus Groups will continue to meet in the afternoons of our Spring meetings.

Programme:

Spring Learn-a-Stitch: Hardanger



Beginners' Hardanger Project



Intermediate Hardanger Project

Please print out your pattern and bring it to Learn-a-Stitch (if you need help with printing, let programming know). We will be providing the fabric for both beginner and intermediate stitchers at the first meeting. Please bring all other supplies on the materials list for your pattern.

March 12 - Programming will say a few words about Hardanger and our schedule for teaching it, and then Diane D will teach kloster stitches for beginners and any intermediates who want to join in. People can practice with doodle cloths, which will be provided. Following the coffee break, programming will pass out the hardanger fabric. The beginners will gather with Diane, who will explain how to center the piece and help them start their projects on the good fabric. Intermediates may sit in on this or start their projects right away.

March 26 – Diane D. will teach eyelets. Both patterns require these, and Mary Lou is hoping that we will have them finished before she comes to teach cutting.

April 9 – Donna will teach blanket stitch (needed only for beginners' pattern).

April 23 - Full-day workshop with Mary Lou Wilson. Mary Lou will be covering cutting and filling stitches. Ideally, everyone will have already finished their klosters, eyelets, and blanket stitches, and will be ready to start cutting. Please bring small, sharp embroidery scissors.

May 14 - working on our hardanger projects

May 28 - finishing our hardanger projects

Events Calendar

Mar. 16, 1 p.m. A Bullet Pulling Thread. Documentary film about a quilt project motivated by police violence and mental disorder. The film's director, Ian Daffern, and the quilter, Marilyn Farquhar, will be present for a post-screening discussion. The Screening Room, 120 Princess St.

Mar 16 – 31. Exhibit of textile art by Gil Segev (a.k.a. Drag Queen Gila Münster). Kingston School of Art, 647a Princess St. Opening reception: Mar. 16, 7 – 9 p.m. Workshop: Mar. 17, 1 – 3 p.m. **Kim Mather of Kimat Designs will be at the workshop with her mobile store. You do not need to take the workshop in order to shop with Kim!**

Fibreart Workshops at the Tett

Mar. 9 – 10 (10 a.m. – 5 p.m.) For the Love of Blue. Dyeing workshop with Bethany Garner

Mar 20 (9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.) The Art of Improv Stitching with Bethany Garner

Mar. 21 (6:30 – 9 p.m.) Needle Felting Bunnies with Rhonda Evans

Apr. 1. Applications close for Mike Parr's **Elizabethan Cherry Tree** class, presented by the Toronto Guild of Stitchery. Techniques are surface embroidery and goldwork. Class will be held at 70 Roehampton Ave., Toronto, Sat. & Sun., Sept. 28 & 29. Fee for non-members of the Toronto Stitchery Guild is \$250. To join the waiting list for non-members, e-mail 1975tgsworkshop@gmail.com





**ART
THREADS**

Annual Exhibition of
The Kingston Fibre Artists

APRIL 6-28, 2024

kingstonfibreartists.ca



Tett Centre Gallery
370 King St. West,
Kingston
Lake Level

Hours:
Monday-Sunday
10AM - 5PM
April 28th: 10AM - 3PM

Artist Demos
April 20 & 24
1:30 - 4:00PM

Walking Tours
April 13 & 25
12:00 - 1:00PM

MORE THAN ME: A CREATIVE INTERFACE

MAY 4 – 15, 2024



An interart exhibition featuring the work of Diane Reesor, fibre artist, and Dianne Lister, photographer

OPENING RECEPTION & ARTIST TALK:

Saturday May 11, 2024 2PM – 4PM

THE TETT CENTRE GALLERY

370 King Street West, Kingston ON K7L 2X4, Canada

CGNA will mount an exhibit at the Lansdowne Textile Festival. **Now** is the time to get your pieces framed and finished and ready for public display!!

FIFTH ANNUAL

Lansdowne TEXTILES FESTIVAL



COME AND ENJOY THE VISION AND FEEL OF HAND CRAFTED ART

See spinners, weavers, rug makers, quilters, needle crafters and more showcase their skills. Feel the softness of the rovings and the colourful hand dyed wool. Finished products, wool, kits, and accessories are waiting to tempt you.

**\$5
ADMISSION**

**Cast your vote in
the Peoples Choice
Award Contest**

Saturday, June 1, 2024

10 am to 4 pm

Lansdowne Community Hall

(follow the signs for the Library)

1 Jessie Street, Lansdowne, Ontario

LUNCH AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

Find us on [f](#) [LansdowneAssociationForRevitalization](#)

PRESENTED BY LANSDOWNE ASSOCIATION FOR REVITALIZATION

The Last Word

Always fold your ongoing work with the good side facing out. This garners compliments and improves motivation (a tip from Martha Beth Lewis).