

What Makes an Award-Winning Stitcher Tick?

The *Needle Pointers* staff wanted to know more about the talented stitchers who won awards in the Seminar Exhibit, so we sent a questionnaire across the country and the ocean to see what they would reveal. We got a great response. So great that we couldn't include all the answers in the Gallery this year.

This supplement is organized in the same way as the Gallery in the magazine so you can easily jump back and forth to read more about the stitcher who created the beautiful needlework piece shown. Keep in mind, not all of the award winners were able to complete and return their questionnaires in time to meet our publication deadlines.

Original Needle Art Non-Professional Category 1-NP

1st Place

None given

2nd Place

None given

3rd Place

102-NP: Melita Glavin, *Crescent River*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

"I kept seeing an aerial view of a river in my mind from one we'd seen on our trip to Alaska. I knew I wanted to do an abstract depiction rather than a realistic view."

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

"I think Jean Hilton stitches are my favorites, perhaps because I loved to play with my Spirograph for hours as a kid. I wanted to use crescents for the motion of the waves of the river and selected a bumpy, random mix of Smyrnas and Rhodes for the rocks banked on either side by grass or eyelet flowers."

What is the best piece of advice you've received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

"Don't worry about taking a class to finish a project; just take it to learn something new and meet new people."

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

"I have really gotten comfortable using the Trolley Needle laying tool. It fits on my index finger and becomes an extension of my hand."

What is your favorite thread and why?

"The Watercolours overdyed threads fascinate me. They add such a variety of color to a piece. The rocks are done with Watercolours Dark Suede (247) and Ash (218). The darker portions are nearer the water because wet rocks would be darker than the dry rocks located farther from the water. The wildflowers on the left river bank are the light portions of Sierra 222 placed randomly with the Rye 223. And the grass along the right river bank is Granite 165, which has a gray-green overdyed thread making the transition from gray rocks to sparse grass with the darker portions of Sierra 222 to make a variety of greens and yellow."

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

"I first started stitching the hole-punched sewing cards — so I was young! I was probably in my teens when I stitched a real piece of needlework. My grandmother, mother, and sister all stitched. In fact, my grandmother hooked rugs, knitted, crocheted, and even did some beautiful leather tooling."

How do you design?

"First, I worked out the crescents on graph paper — trying to get a curve ± that was the tough part but also fun. I love the designing aspect. My first attempts dissected the paper almost straight

across with no movement, but they did narrow nicely. It took several drawings before I found I could get the bend.”

Does the piece change during stitching if you begin with a hand- or computer-generated design?

“The rocks were randomly placed without any planning. The smaller rocks closer to the water are Smyrna and Elongated Smyrnas, while the larger rocks farther away are various Rhodes. I looked at the area as I progressed and tried to pick the next stitch for the area and vary what I picked. I didn’t care if they weren’t always a perfect fit. A couple of half cross stitches over one thread were added to fill in.

“I was almost done with the wild flowers when I saw Janet Perry’s Nuts about Needlepoint’s blog about an ‘open water stitch’ that would work for my river. She said it is a slight variation of a stitch David McCaskill used for an ANG Stitch of the Month. So in addition to the waves, I added some water using Water N’ Ice (WT1), which is a translucent thread, perfect for a reflective surface. But it would have been easier if I had stitched them first.”

Original Needle Art Professional Category 1-P

**1st Place
President’s Choice Award
Silk & Metal Award
Delegates’ Choice**

1013-P: Meredith Willett, *Venetian Pavone*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“Favorite: I love silk and metal thread embroidery! The history of silk and metal embroidery is so rich and fascinating, not to mention how amazing it is to watch it develop into such beautiful pieces of art.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“I could never pick one! I love all my tools, and they make my stitching so much fun. I have an old spool cabinet beside my stitching chair; I open my drawer of tools, and I have a choice of 8 laying tools, 10 scissors, different sizes of needles, magnets, tape measures, wax, and many other things I use. I just leave the drawer open

while I’m stitching and always have what I need at my fingertips!”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I often tell students in a class if I was on a deserted island and could only take one thread with me, it would be Sparkle Rays. I just love it! Mostly because it’s sparkly and comes in such great colors. You can strip it (not easy, but it can be done), you can make gorgeous turkey work with it, you can ruche it. It’s just a favorite to me.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“My best friend’s mother taught me to do embroidery on a pillowcase when I was six years old. *I loved it immediately!* I covered that pillowcase front and back! Needlepoint in high school, making needlepoint belts for my boyfriend. Then in college I did some cross stitch, and then back to my love, needlepoint. I told my mother when I was a senior in high school that I did not want to go to college, I wanted to open a needlework store. She laughed and said, ‘Well go to college to have something to fall back on if a needlework store doesn’t work for you.’ Hahaha, she laughs about that now!”

How do you design?

“I have always loved to sketch, paint, and draw. So I design by sketching my idea first. As I am stitching, I change things along the way. Originally I did not think about putting Swarovski crystals on the mask until I was almost done, so things change as I stitch.

2nd Place

1001-P: Catherine Jordan, *The Gift*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“The ANG Quest Challenge, *The Open Canvas*, was compelling to me as I love open work and the many possibilities it offers. My mother and I had taken a class with Carolyn Ambuter, author of *The Open Canvas* book, many years ago and enjoyed all of her techniques. This challenge offered an opportunity to explore more open and finishing techniques.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“I love all types of needlework and enjoy combining them for spectacular results. This

includes painting and coloring effects, combined with counted and surface embroidery, and then adding layers and raised and dimensional details both under and over the ground material.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“My mother always said ‘never give up,’ and it is good advice to follow. So if you are having a difficult time, sometimes it is best to look at what you are doing and try to understand where the difficulty lies. This includes the process of designing as well as stitching. If things are not going well, it is always a good opportunity to try to find out why. ‘You learn more from your mistakes than your successes’ is very true.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I did not learn to stitch until after I completed college, but I saw my mother needlepoint most of my life. My mother and I took classes together, and she started taking me to classes and guiding my work. My other mentor was Mary-Dick Digges, a generous and gifted teacher exposing me to traditional Japanese embroidery as well as early American crewel embroidery.

How do you design?

“I usually begin by sketching an idea into a journal, making notes, and setting up a framework to ensure an interesting and unified design; then I stitch a bit, continue to make notes, and adjust the sketch and needlework as things progress. Many times I do not know how the final design will look until I am close to the end. I had originally planned for the box to be black; but then as I worked, I thought the glass would better enhance the theme of openness. I considered a stumpwork butterfly or flower inside the box, until I came across the quote, “Each day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons,” by Ruth Ann Schabaker, which was perfect for the design; I did not see the quote until the ribbons and glass box were completely finished.”

Does the piece change during stitching?

“The design always changes from the original sketch because it is very difficult to foresee how each stitch and thread choice will impact what has already been done.”

3rd Place

Judge’s Choice (Jennifer Riefenberg)

1007-P, Gail Stafford, *At The Beach*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“One of my favorite stitches is interlocking Gobelin. I have used it effectively for stitching sky and water. I like the fact that you get smooth color transitions when you use this stitch with an overdyed thread. In the case of *At the Beach*, I used interlocking Gobelin for the overhanging portions of the umbrella.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Less is more. I have read many design articles by Mary Shipp and once took a design correspondence course from her. In one of her articles, she wrote about ‘less is more.’ The idea is that if the desired message can be conveyed with less, then do that. I often find I start with a more complicated design and remove some elements. In the case of *At the Beach*, a boogie board was in the original sketch but added nothing to the overall composition, so I removed it.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“I know there are many different laying tools on the market, but I use a bodkin as a laying tool and always have at least one with me. I like the flat edge, and it works for me.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I use a lot of overdyed cotton threads in my designs. I like to see the way the color varies and creates a smooth transition from one value to another or one hue to another.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I’m not good about remembering things like this. I did some crewel work when I was in high school, but don’t know how I got started on that. I did a lot of counted cross stitch during and following my college days. When I was a college student and home for a break, my mother gave me a small needlepoint sampler with a variety stitches, and that may have been my first needlepoint experience.”

How do you design?

“I usually design by starting with a digital camera. I have a subject in mind but that isn’t enough. I take a large number of photographs, trying to figure out exactly what I want. I often recognize that a scene might be pretty but in need of a focal point to make it work as an effective composition.

“I work from the photograph to make a line drawing and eliminate elements as needed. I select potential threads for my design and jump into trying out stitches on a doodle cloth. Once I have a few decisions made, I stitch those components and wait for the other decisions to come. Sometimes the waiting and experimenting is painful.”

Does the piece change during stitching if you begin with a hand- or computer-generated design?

“I start with a line design and a plan and almost always change the piece during the stitching. In the case of *At the Beach*, I struggled with the sand decision. I tried out different threads and stitches and eventually used an overdyed cotton thread in the Nobuku stitch. I also had many failed attempts at the chairs. Color was a problem, as were the towels. In the end, I changed the right-hand chair to one very different from the one in my photo and removed the towel completely.

State, 21st Century Sampler

1002-P: Lorene Salt, *Frida*

Adaptation

Non-Professional

Category 2-NP

1st Place

Best in Show

201-NP: Gretchen Wolf, *The Chicago Skyline*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“I guess I don’t have a favorite stitch. But I try to choose the stitch to make the impression I want for each piece. I have a library of old and new stitch books. I studied the skyline picture and the books to decide what stitch or group of stitches might work for each building. I think beginning

stitchers should have at least three different stitch books. They should be encouraged to refer to these books from the beginning of their stitching.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Keep it simple. Less is more. As time has gone on, the fewer plies of thread to get the job done is the best. Peg Ewing has been my best mentor; her advice has been exceptional. Peg always has a good supply of new stitching books for me to buy. She also introduced me to *Needlepoint Now*. I have subscribed to that magazine since its inception. She also told me who to use as a framer. You must have a meticulous framer.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My laying tools. I think you need a collection of wood, plastic, and metal ones. I find that just one is not good for all threads. Tony Minieri once advised that if there is more than one thread in your hand, you need a laying tool. The newest tool I have is a small hair straightener. It works wonderfully to get the packaging kinks out of all threads, especially ribbons and other flat threads.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I really like overdyes. I truly believe there are many colors making up one color; although overdyes are not practical for all pieces. I will try out and stitch with all kinds of threads. They must be appropriate for the piece. The one fiber I will not use is #3 DMC pearl cotton.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“My first piece is dated 1975. (I think dating pieces is a must.) My mother and Marshall Fields set me on this path. It is a fill in the background piece. The next piece was a design found in the “black bible,” *The Needlepoint Book*. The piece is dated 1976. Once again, even with a painted canvas, you need a choice of stitches.”

How do you design?

”It is truly an original, but I entered the piece in the Adaptation Class. Why? you are asking. The definition is “a design translated or adapted from a design source created in a medium other than

needlepoint.” I have a good friend, Jon Aros, who photographs the Chicago skyline. I asked him if it was possible to produce a complete skyline and print that picture on canvas. Always ready for a challenge, he did and it worked. Therefore “an adaptation from a medium other than needlepoint.”

2nd Place Creative Inspiration Award

202-NP: Ann Landry, *Ted’s Doodles*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I love geometric shapes and find them very challenging to replicate. That is why I chose Ted’s doodles to stitch; his doodles tend to be geometric in shape. I borrowed this doodle to replicate in needlepoint.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“My most frustrating stitches are the ones that have too many numbers to count. It is hard for me to count them with the TV on and the telephone ringing.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“One piece of advice I received from Ann Strite-Kurz was to always tie your thread off in the direction in which you are stitching. That way the stitch will not only cover the canvas adequately but lean in the direction it needs to lean.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My favorite tools are my magnets. I use them on every corner of my piece. That way I can always find my needle and laying tools.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I love #5 pearl cotton because it is shiny and doesn’t have to be stitched and laid.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I started stitching in 1973. I had just moved back to Houston, Texas, and wanted to meet new friends. I had been stitching crewel and was ready to move on to needlepoint. I took a beginning class at my local shop and was told that no one ever finished their piece the next day.

Well, I did! And that started my needlepoint journey.”

How do you design?

“I design by having an idea in my head and begin by pulling colors from my stash. I just start stitching. If I don’t like what I stitch I take it out and start again.

3rd Place

204-NP: Kristina Robinson, *The Birds – Paris, Rue Bonaparte*

Adaptation Professional Category 2-P

1st Place

Princess Grace Award

2002-P: Philip Bush, *The Oldest Angel*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I saw a copy of this painting in an art store and was so taken with it that I knew I had to do it in needlepoint.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“I only have two stitches in my useful book of ability (tent stitch and long stitch).”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Keep doing what you do.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My best tool is my mind. I will only do pictures that interest me.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“So far I have only used DMC embroidery floss (and that is in the last 30 years).”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I have been stitching for some 30 years. I started after watching my wife, but as soon as I started, she quit.”

How do you design?

“I always stitch from photos of paintings or landscapes that interest me. I have the photo enlarged, then trace the enlargement on canvas, and use the original photo as my color chart.”

Does the piece change during stitching if you begin with a hand- or computer-generated design?

“No, as a general rule.”

2nd Place

2001-P: Jonathan Brown, *Ammonite*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“It was my mother’s fault. I was doodling while speaking to her on the telephone and it turned into a coil with lines across it. I was reminded of ammonites, one of nature’s perfect shapes, and I thought it would be fun and interesting to design a piece with an ammonite as the main theme. I wanted to try and catch the idea of the fossil arising out of the slab of stone in the background, the gradation of color within the fossil area; I wanted just a little sparkle to show the inner cell walls so I used silks for sheen and Kreinik braids of various colors for the outlines.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“The most frustrating and challenging stitch has to be basketweave. It looks simple, it is simple; but if it is not carefully stitched, you can easily end up with runs, zippers, lumps, and pulls. The challenge is to get such a simple stitch “just right,” and the frustration is how often you don’t!”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Don’t use a heavy black in the center or in large areas unless you are really confident in what you are doing.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My Tekobari. It lays, it frogs, it has a blunt end. You can use it to manipulate threads and metals, or to scratch your head when something has gone wrong and you don’t see how.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Soie d’Alger. I just like the way silk lays and shines, and it can be very forgiving.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“Fifty years if you count the mending I had to do at school. I’ve been embroidering for about 40

years and serious for the last 20. My wife says I’m not a real stitcher because I finish everything.”

How do you design?

“My designs usually start with a random doodle or a conversation. Once I have a general idea of what I want to achieve, I will go through a number of scribbles and sketches until I am ready to commit the design to paper. I am totally without any drawing skills but the squares help. I will do an outline based on the size I want the piece to be, then I’ll let it sit while I select colors and threads and stitches. Except for the background: if there is a definite background, I then draw in every stitch before I put needle to thread.”

Does the piece change during stitching if you begin with a hand- or computer-generated design?

“There are always changes. Either a stitch does not work or a color does not fit. The design will not undergo major changes at this point, but sometimes a curve on paper does not look as smooth on canvas and has to be fixed. It is important to note these changes on the design chart.”

3d Place

None given

Honorable Mention

2003-P: Philip Bush, *Thank You, He’s Found*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“This was from a postcard and was requested by a third party.”

Independent Project Non-Professional Category 3-NP

1st Place

Small Masterpiece Award

306-NP: Arlene Cohen, *Rhododendrons*

Would you like to add anything to your Artist Statement?

“I just wish to share that I enjoy many different techniques in needlework. I don’t have one particular favorite, nor a favorite thread or stitch. I began stitching when I was in high school, starting with cross stitch but moving into worlds

of canvaswork and all types of counted thread in the years after. I enjoy working on basically one project at a time, although often spending much time thinking about what the next one will be, almost always in a different technique. For example, I am currently working on a blackwork piece, with the plans for a counted canvaswork piece already churning in my head for the next project.”

2nd Place

Hilton Stitch Award

308-NP: Violet Anderson, *Mulberry & Lime*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“Favorite: I like learning, whether it’s new stitches, new techniques, controlling the colors, or things unrelated to needlework. Most frustrating: Triple Jessicas weren’t easy but look great when finished.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teach, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Just try it step by step and stitch what you like. Stitching is supposed to be fun.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“Magnifying glasses, more so in recent years, and good light.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I think it’s probably the one I haven’t tried yet.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“My mother and both grandmothers stitched, mostly stamped pieces. I have my first two doilies I made in junior high that my mother crocheted edgings for. As an occupational therapist trained a long time ago, I had to take needlework and craft classes, so I learned many techniques, paying college tuition for them!”

3rd Place

None given

Honorable Mention

301-NP: Cindy Durston, *Hilton My Way*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I love Christmas and wanted to stitch this piece, with Jean Hilton’s permission to change the

ground and the colors, in traditional Victorian reds, creams, whites and golds on a Victorian red ground.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“My favorite technique is almost anything that causes you to stop and think, then plunge in stitching joyfully. The most challenging technique was stitching with Kreinik #4 Braid to create Jessicas that cascade down then up, on the diagonal intertwining. It becomes easy as you stitch, but initially it’s a challenge. To be honest, I find nothing about needlepoint stitches frustrating, just sometimes a challenge to conquer.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“To learn as much as you can in a class, online, at Seminar, at Chapter events, or at your local needlework shop. Become familiar with your own personal stitching style, perfect it to the best it can possibly be, and then just have fun stitching. As Chottie Anderson said, ‘If it’s not fun, it is not needlepoint.’”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“That would have to be a good laying tool. Stitches with multiple strands look best when laid or guided into the canvas opening with the strands lying side by side. The finished piece will garner many more compliments than a piece that is stitched willy-nilly.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I love silks, in solid colors or overdyes. A close second is any sparkly thread that can create interest.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I have been stitching since I was a little girl. My great-grandmother taught me to crochet the chain stitch when I was about seven. Then my grandmother, aunt, and mother showed me how to stitch a linen sampler when I was 10. That started a life-long love of creating with my hands, which evolved into a needlepoint obsession. There, I have said it. I love needlepoint!”

Independent Project Professional Category 3-P

1st Place

None given

2nd Place

3001-P: Pamela Harding, *Butterflies*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“This was my third submission for Phase one of the Canvas Master Craftsman program for EGA. Unfortunately I did not receive a ‘pass,’ so have withdrawn from the program. But I was nonetheless pleased with the final results and wanted it to be judged at the exhibit in Chicago.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“The most challenging portion in this piece was to compensate for the circles/curved areas using just 10 different pre-selected stitches without outlining. Surprisingly, the most favorite part was how the colors came together using a monochromatic color scheme with only five values. I’ve never considered myself an expert in color theory, but I’m happy that the colors seem to work.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“From a teacher: Pay attention to what is going on on the back of the work because it does affect the front.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“A laying tool, preferably my Finella.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I love Gloriana silks for their richness in color and the lustrous feel.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I started stitching while in the Navy stationed in Adak, Alaska, in the 1980s. I taught myself all forms of counted thread work by following the instructions in books. I discovered canvaswork in 1995 and haven’t looked back since!”

3rd Place

3010-P: Gail Sirna, *Forest Friends*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“The most challenging animal in this design was the fawn at the bottom center. It took me about a week to stitch it, and there are at least 12 values/colors used to depict the deer. I started with just a line drawing, based on a picture in a wildlife book, and went from there. It is all stitched in more or less the needlepainting style, with either one or two strands of embroidery floss. I used a sharp needle for this.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Pay attention to perspective.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My laying tool. How else does one get her threads to lie flat.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I like any stranded fine thread. I love Waterlilies, but that is such an expensive thread. However, its gradations are wonderful. And it has a lovely sheen. But the other overdyed flosses are good too, and so are the single-color embroidery cottons (like DMC or Anchor floss) or Soie d’Alger.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I started stitching at age eight and have rarely been without a needle in my hand ever since (except when I am reading.) My paternal aunt started me off with some embroidery as a Christmas present, and I have loved it ever since. Even my first sampler in Girl Scouts (remember the needlecraft badge?) was pretty good.”

How do you design?

“I start with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper. I might use a picture of something to get the proportions right—I certainly referred to my bird books and mammal books for this piece. I draw a design, make copies of it, then color one copy in with color pencils. This is when the design really comes alive. I then write in stitch suggestions on another copy. I trace it onto canvas, gather up some threads, and start stitching.”

Does the piece change during stitching?

“Yes, sometimes I think to add something or change its location. Creative ideas flow during the act of stitching. And I am open to making alterations. Sometimes an idea just doesn’t work. It can be painful to abandon a cherished idea, but the design must move on.”

Honorable Mention

3002-P: Lorene Salt, *Marisol*

Honorable Mention

3011-P: Gail Sirna, *Artistry in Aqua*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“The crescent shapes filled with needle lace were a little challenging. I was trying to imitate lace, and the challenge was to make the loops in this element stay where I wanted them. And to keep the silk from separating.”

Painted Design Without Stitch Guide Non-Professional Category 4-NP

1st Place

Judge’s Choice (Donna Halpin)

407-NP: Diane Marks, *A Winter Walk: Santa and Snow Leopards*

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“Long and short is one of my favorite, most challenging, and most frustrating stitches. It creates the most beautiful resemblance to thread painting. It also can be boring and challenge my patience.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“A teacher friend of mine once told me I was one of the best thread painters she knew and that teacher was Susan Hulme. I never did have a chance to take her class; always wished I could have.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Silk, hands down! It’s wonderful to work with, has a ton of shade variations, and has a shine that gets better with age.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I have been stitching for a long time. I’m not aging myself in print! When my son was in the fourth grade, he went to science camp. I stayed in the parking lot with a Susan Portra nutcracker canvas, her printed stitch guide, and the stitcher’s bible (*The Needlepoint Book* by Jo Christensen). I’d look the stitch up and teach myself! Before too long I was taking classes with Susan Portra, who taught me a lot and gave me confidence to begin improvising and developing my own style.

2nd Place

410-NP: Marla Frazier, *Let’s Go Sailing*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“Sadly, one of my dearest friends had started stitching the border around the pond on this canvas before she passed away from cancer. I finished it as a token of my affection for her, because it was so representative of the type of canvases she enjoyed stitching.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“In this piece, I don’t know the name of the stitch, but it makes great grass, especially random tufts of it. I copied it from a piece I saw in an exhibit.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My magnifying glasses, I couldn’t stitch without them.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I always love overdyes. There are certainly many places where a solid is the better choice, but I do love to use an overdye whenever possible for the visual complexity it gives.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I learned to sew, embroider, and crochet from my mother and grandmother at a very early age. I did cross stitch until I couldn’t resist the fiber and stitch choices available to my needle-pointing friends any longer!”

2nd Place

415-NP: Janet Edgar, *Copa – A Showgirl*

3rd Place

414-NP: Elizabeth Pansino, *Garden Thief*

Honorable Mention

Wearable Art Award

405-NP: Mary Williams, *Oriental Style Small Purse*

Honorable Mention

406-NP: Kathy Larsen, *Three Sisters*

Painted Design Without Stitch Guide Professional Category 4-P

1st Place

Judge's Choice (Mary K. Campbell)

4006-P: Brenda Hart, *Multicolored Floral*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

"The flowers looked so real and soft."

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

"A laying tool would be the tool I could never be without. It helps to lay the strands side by side, which helps the strands to have a beautiful sheen."

What is your favorite thread and why?

"Silk, Bijoux, and Boucle, in that order. Silk makes anything beautiful. Bijoux and Boucle give canvases special effects without a whole lot of effort."

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

"I've been stitching for 33 years. Two good friends, Eileen Knoll and Diane O'Leary, got me started."

2nd Place

4002-P: Vicky DeAngelis, *Meet Mr. Cat*

3rd Place

4003-P: Gayle Athy, *Blooming Poppy Scissor Case*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

"I was searching for a suitable piece to teach. I wanted something small, but substantive with

vibrant color, one to which I felt that I could add dimension."

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

"Padded satin is quite a challenge to accurately cover the sculpted roving wool without having some fibers popping through. Smooth and beautiful satin stitching is always a challenge, most especially with 4mm silk ribbon!"

What is the best piece of advice you've received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

"As I'm a teacher (having needlepointed for 45 years and having taught for 20+ years), people generally do not offer advice, they ask for it!"

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

"Good quality sharp scissors! They make a stitcher's life much easier, from cutting a nice edge on fibers for easy needle threading to cutting away stitches from a canvas."

What is your favorite thread and why?

"I do not have a favorite thread per se, as I feel that it is necessary to use whatever thread best enhances each specific area on the canvas. A thread's sheen, brightness, dullness, or texture is a necessary tool in defining a design. So I often use threads whether I personally like them or not!"

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

"Forty-five years. My mom was a needlepointer and probably tired of my asking her questions about her stitching, so she started me on my own pre-stitched ballerina canvas at eight years old."

How do you design?

"I only stitch on handpainted canvases. I create as I go or create a stitch guide in my head; but trust me, I do my share of 'unstitching'!"

Does the piece change during stitching if you begin with a hand- or computer-generated design?

"Sometimes I make changes with paint, sometimes with my threads if I feel that the overall outcome is a definite improvement. I often add embellishment and add borders."

Painted Design With Stitch Guide **Non-Professional** **Category 5-NP**

1st Place

513-NP: Kathleen McEligot, *LOVE*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“The happy and bold colors caught my eye when I first saw the piece in a magazine. I especially like bold pinks of any kind. And the design of the canvas gave me a lot of large spaces for decorative stitches. So I had my LNS order it on #18 canvas for me!”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“Favorite stitch: French knots. I have been doing them since high school. They are easy and fast for me. And I use them somewhere on almost every piece. Most challenging stitch: Anything that is random – random long and short, random Scotch, anything using the “R” word. I am an accountant. I like grids. Brenda keeps giving me random stitches to push me outside of my comfort zone, but I do not have to like it! Most frustrating stitch: Bullions. For the life of me, I cannot get bullions to look perfect. The orange chain stitch on *LOVE* was originally supposed to be bullions. If Brenda is reading this, she now knows I changed that.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“A friend once told me to stitch what I liked, not what I think judges or teachers want me to stitch. It is great advice. The best pieces I have stitched are ones that I just had fun stitching for myself!”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My hand-made wooden laying tool. I love the feel of it in my hand. It makes all threads lay flat. It doesn’t get caught in airport scanners so I travel the world with it!”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Soie D’Alger silk. This thread always lays smoothly, doesn’t wear quickly, and makes great French knots.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I have had a needle and thread in my hand since I was a child (my mother always sewed), but it was my high school sewing teacher who introduced me to all of the needle arts. So my first needlepoint experience was 40+ years ago. While I did more cross stitch than anything else in high school and college, I seriously moved to needlepoint when my first son was born in 1982. He needed a needlepoint stocking! I have not been without a needlepoint project in process since then. And now I am perfectly comfortable with dozens in process at the same time!

2nd Place

Nina M. Goerres Award

512-NP: Vicki Buckrop, *Frontier Santa*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I’m an animal lover, I like bright colors, and I thought it was cute. I thought it would embellish well.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“The technique that I find most challenging is applique. I have to get it right the first time, because if I don’t, it seems to get worse each subsequent try. My favorite technique is threadpainting, although I don’t do much of it. I like the realistic effect.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“I don’t know if you would call it advice, but Meredith Willet did a great demonstration on beading in the Fab Four class in Philadelphia, 2012. Everything I know about beading, I learned in that class.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My trolley needle. When I sit down to stitch, it’s the first thing I look for, even if I’m not going to be laying threads. I’ve tried other laying tools, but this is the one I prefer.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Probably Vineyard Silk. It just feels so luxurious. And I love overdyes, even if I just look at them more than I stitch with them.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“My grandmother and mother quilted, but I had absolutely no interest in stitching until one summer when I was home from college. My mother came home from a visit to a crafts store with a little embroidery kit and I was hooked. My first project was an embroidered carrot.

3rd Place

511-NP: Susan Heider, *Bon Appetit*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“Two things: the recurring black-and-white checkerboard pattern and the words ‘Bon Appetit,’ related to cooking, which is another passion of mine.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“One of my favorite stitches is the Scotch stitch. I like the size and direction variations you can use to give a different appearance in your stitching. It appears in most of the pieces I design and stitch.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Marnie Ritter said, ‘Pick a poison color and add it!’ and ‘Stitch what you know!’”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“My Ott lamps! They provide the best pure light and help eliminate any shadows while stitching.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Pearl cotton is my absolute favorite, whether it is #5, #8, or #12, solid or overdyed. I try to include it in every piece I stitch. I like stitching with Finca and Valdani because of their color intensity, plus they have less tendency to fray and thin. Caron Watercolours is also a favorite.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I set myself on the needlepoint path in 1973 when I was 19 by purchasing two kits from *Good Housekeeping* magazine – mushrooms and a Raggedy Andy. I still have the Raggedy Andy to remind me of how I started. My mother was a great seamstress and knitter. My grandmother

quilted and braided rugs. I wanted to do something different to share with them, since they had shared so many of their gifts from their hands with me.”

How do you design?

“I did not design this piece but do design many of the pieces I stitch. I usually start with photos that are the inspiration; then sketch a design incorporating my inspiration photos.”

Does the piece change during stitching if you begin with a hand- or computer-generated design?

“My initial sketch usually includes stitches, colors, and fibers. As I begin stitching, I may make changes to stitches, colors, and fibers. Rarely does my finished piece end up like my initial sketch.”

Honorable Mention

First Time Exhibitor Award

514-NP: Peggy Peterson, *Tabasco Oysters*

Honorable Mention

520-NP: Deborah Kummer, *Kindness*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“It’s calming, serene. It’s a great piece for different stitches, and smaller than the ones I normally stitch.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“Beading. I love the effect that beads give. They can be stitched individually, in bricks, and in strings.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“From a judge: How my entire design balances perfectly with three areas of interest, each of which leads to another.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“Laying tool trolley. I like my stitches to lay perfectly.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Silk. Soie d’Alger is my favorite thread. I love the way it feels. It lays so easily.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I have been stitching 20+ years. My mother was the one to expose me to needlepoint. She was a knitter and did a little needlepoint. Being left-handed, knitting was backward. My mother, at age 88, is still needlepointing.”

State Award

506-NP: Laura Taylor, *Her Highness*

Painted Design With Stitch Guide

Professional Category 5-P

1st Place

None given

2nd Place

None given

3rd Place

None given

Honorable Mention

5001-P: Jane Hitz, *Stitching Club*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“The ladies presented lots of opportunities for using a variety of stitches, threads, and embellishments. I even named the club members. From left to right: Resourceful Rosie (uses nontraditional materials to do the stitching for her), Perfect Patti (all her pieces are done and she wins ribbons), Showoff Sue (loves telling everyone how to do things), Frantic Frieda (always in a tear to get somewhere), and Klueless Kate (has no idea what she’s doing).”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“Silk ribbon embroidery is almost impossible.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Have fun!”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“Thread Zap II. It melts ends of synthetic threads so they don’t ravel.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Overdyed silks simplify shading and add lots of interest.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I’ve been doing some form of needlework since I was six or seven.”

Class Project Non-Professional Category 6-NP

1st Place

607-NP: Neva Pruess, *The Little Quail*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“When I saw the piece at Callaway Gardens, displayed for the next year classes, I knew I had to do this one. I love Lynn’s creative and unusual classes and I’m a birder, so the quail called to me.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“For this piece, the hardest part of the quail was getting the cording attached around the edges of the detached leaves. The bonding techniques Lynn uses in many of her pieces are a challenge but I’ve done it a lot now.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“All of it’s been good. Can’t think of anything that stands out.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“At my age, my needle threader. Also much of the time my magnifier and lamp.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“Silks of all kinds. Also love metallics.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I made a doll-size crazy quilt over 70 years ago. Figured out how to do it all by myself, using herringbone on the seams. While I was out doing my usual tomboy stuff, playing in the gravel pit, my grandmother backed it for me. I still have it. Grandmother quilted, mother did nothing but darn socks. I just picked it all up somewhere.”

2nd Place

606-NP: Neva Pruess, *Tree of Life*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“Another piece that I knew I had to do as soon as I saw it in the next year classes displayed at Callaway. Lynn described it as a back to basics, no glue, no bonding, no detached elements (but miles of invisible thread). And it was basics for the set elements, laid silks, satin stitch, long and short, buttonhole, beading, etc. But the tree trunk and limbs are a creative free-for-all done by layering metallic threads.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“In general, geometric counted stitches, especially the Jean Hilton ones and also soft shading, long and short, embroidery stitches on canvases are my favorite stitches. A contrast but I like to do both.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“For the last 70 years or so, I’ve usually been stitching something. It’s just what I do. I taught myself crewel work in the 1960s. I discovered canvaswork in the 1970s. When I became an EGA and ANG member in the early 1980s and began to attend workshops and seminars, I went off in all directions.”

3rd Place

602-NP: Stephanie Horsley, *East Meets Southwest Kimono*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I am a great admirer of all of Margaret’s designs. I liked this one in particular because of the variety of stitches, and it was a great opportunity for learning. It was also my first time stitching with silk, which I very quickly fell in love with.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“My favorite technique is laying threads. Especially in stitching this piece, I found that if you do it right, taking great care with the threads, when they are placed, it can almost look as if the piece has been painted rather than stitched.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“The best piece of advice I have received for stitching actually came from Margaret Bendig, who said that when you have to redo something you have already stitched, rather than being frustrated by having to repeat something, look at it as an opportunity to learn again.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“I believe that a laying tool is a true stitcher’s friend and should never be more than an arm’s length away when working on a piece of any kind. It really does make a difference in the appearance of the stitches and the flow of the piece as a whole.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“My favorite threads are metallics. I am drawn to anything that uses these threads. I think it gives a piece a high-quality look and really brings a design to life.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I learned a bit about stitching from my mother when I was young, but have become a much more avid stitcher in the last three years. I really became engrossed in it when I visited a local needlepoint store that I read about. As soon as I walked through the doors, I knew stitching was something I wanted to do much more.”

Honorable Mention

608-NP: Sandy Meono, *Amazing Greys*

Honorable Mention

620-NP: Barbara Volk, *Irresistible Iridescents*

Sampler Award

623-NP: Barbara Volk, *In the Footsteps of the Pharaohs*

Class Project Professional Category 6-P

1st Place

6004-P: Gail Stafford, *Daffodil Hill*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I love the field of daffodils and wanted to take a class from Lois Kershner.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“I really love bargello. The patterns are all based on a single satin or Gobelin stitch and are created by varying the stitch length and/or the step and the number of stitches that are placed side by side. I particularly like to see smooth value transitions in bargello patterns.”

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received about your art from a judge, teacher, designer, friend, spouse, or relative?

“Less is more. I have read many design articles by Mary Shipp and once took a design correspondence course from her. In one of her articles, she wrote about ‘less is more.’ The idea is that if the desired message can be conveyed with less, then do that. I often find I start with a more complicated design and remove some elements.”

What is the one tool you would never be without and why?

“I know there are many different laying tools on the market, but I use a bodkin as a laying tool and always have at least one with me. I like the flat edge and it works for me.”

What is your favorite thread and why?

“I use a lot of floss (stranded embroidery cotton). It is an inexpensive thread, but the effect is lovely as long as you separate the strands and put them back together and then use a laying tool.”

How long have you been stitching, and who set you on this path?

“I’m not good about remembering things like this. I did some crewel work when I was in high school, but don’t know how I got started on that. I did a lot of counted cross stitch during and following my college days. When I was a college student and home for a break, my mother gave me a small needlepoint sampler with a variety of stitches, and that may have been my first needlepoint experience.”

2nd Place

6009-P: Pamela Harding, *The Wave Nametag*

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

“I took *The Wave* class at the 2013 ANG Seminar in Anaheim. I had always wanted to take a class from Joni and this piece ‘spoke’ to me. While in the class, I knew that I wanted to adapt the design to a nametag.”

What is your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating stitch or technique and why?

“The challenging part was deciding how to scale down the piece to a nametag size. It ended up being slightly larger than my ‘normal’ nametag size, but I think it ended up being pretty balanced.”

3rd Place

People’s Choice

6003-P: Katherine Becker, *Evening Bag Sampler*