

THE · BULLETIN · OF  
THE · NEEDLE · AND · BOBBIN  
CLUB

VOLUME · 19 · NUMBER · 1

1935

# THE BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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PORTRAIT OF AMELITA GALLI-CURCI.

EMBROIDERY IN FINE WOOLS ON "FLESH RACHEL" LINEN FOR SKIN TONE. LINE AND DESIGN GIVING DEPTH AND EXPRESSION AS IN CHINESE PORTRAITURE AND IN OLD MANUSCRIPT PAINTINGS. STITCHES: SIMPLE OUTLINE, BUTTONHOLE, RUMANIAN, CHAIN, RUNNING AND DARNING; WITH CONCENTRATION ON MOVEMENT AND RHYTHM. PRIVATELY OWNED (1924).

## GEORGIANA BROWN HARBESON, A PAINTER IN NEEDLEWORK

*by*

FRANCES MORRIS

**A**S THIS number of the BULLETIN gives a brief survey of the field of modern embroidery, it is fitting that a few introductory paragraphs should be devoted to the work of the Club member to whom we are indebted for the following articles, one who is herself a veritable painter in needlework—Mrs. Georgiana Brown Harbeson.

Mrs. Harbeson, who is generally conceded to be the foremost American exponent of the modern movement in embroidery, is of New England ancestry. She thus comes naturally by a pioneering instinct that has a tendency to lead her adventurous spirit into new realms of activity, for she is the great-niece of Lucy Ann Packard of Quincy, Massachusetts, who was the first woman to be granted the privilege of making needlework copies of portraits in the Vatican.

Blessed with such a heritage and endowed with a wealth of imagination, it is not surprising that though still young, she has to her credit an enviable record of achievement. She is a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, a member of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, a mural painter and creator of a number of Broadway stage settings and ballets.<sup>1</sup>

In turning aside from painting, Mrs. Harbeson, therefore, brought to this, her latest field of attainment, the exceptional variety of technical training that it has been her aim to acquire in her devotion to the idea that the inspiration of an artist should find expression in many mediums in order that each expression might be enriched by all that has been

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<sup>1</sup> "Venetian Lace Ballet" in John Murray Anderson's "Jack and Jill." The "Sampler Ballet" for the Paramount Theatre. "Greenwich Village Follies." "The Vinegar Tree."

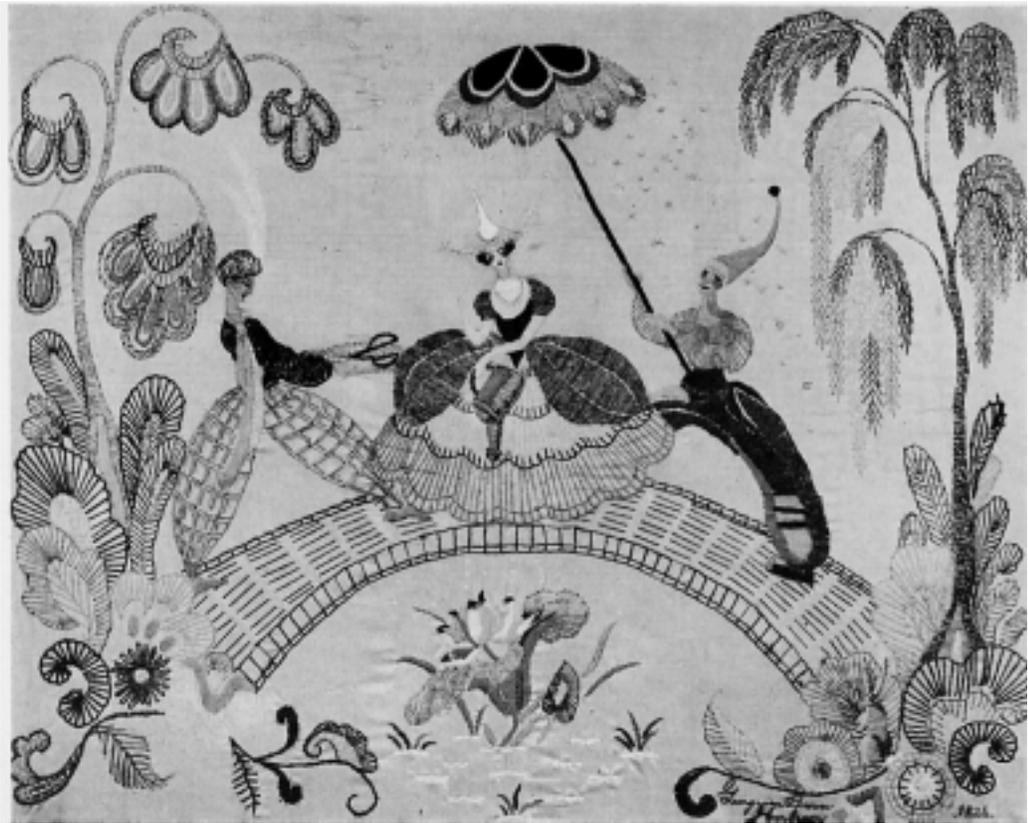


PLATE I—WATERING THE LILY.

CHINESE CHIPPENDALE OVERMANTEL FOR A BOUDOIR. EMBROIDERY IN FINE WOOL ON GREEN-BLUE TAFFETA. COLORS: CORALS, FLESH, PALE, AND YELLOW GREENS; SHADES OF ORANGE, VERMILION. WATER DROPS SUGGESTED IN LITTLE OPALESCENT BEADS. TOUCHES OF SILVER THREAD IN THE STARS. COURTESY OF MRS. BELFIELD, MERION, PA. (1926).



PLATE II—SPIRIT OF NEW ENGLAND.

"I HEARD A BIRD SING IN THE DARK OF DECEMBER  
'T WAS A MAGICAL THING AND SWEET TO REMEMBER."

EMBROIDERY IN FINE WOOL ON WHITE VELVET. COLORS: DARK GRAY AND BLUE TONES; COSTUME IN MAPLE ORANGE. STITCHES: DARNING, BUTTONHOLE, SATIN, HERRING-BONE (ON COSTUME), CROSS-STITCH, Y, AND STEM STITCHES. COURTESY OF MRS. FRANKLIN MAGEE, NEW YORK (1927).



PLATE III—THE ENCHANTED ISLE.

EMBROIDERY IN CREWEL ON GREEN BLUE TAFFETA IN TONES OF YELLOW, BLUE GREENS, CORALS, AND TWO SHADES OF VIOLET BLUE. ORIGINAL IN THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS, HONOLULU, HAWAII (1931).



learned from other techniques—a theory the truth of which is clearly demonstrated in the exceptional quality of her work. Thus equipped she naturally experienced no difficulty in substituting the needle for the brush, although in this new medium her mastership of the latter is clearly indicated in the brush-like quality of her stitchery.

Perhaps Mrs. Harbeson's most valuable contribution to the development of high standards in modern embroidery is that she demonstrates the importance of strict adherence to the fundamental principles of design, and the value of simplicity in line as a vitalizing force in the creation of a pattern.

Referring to the evolution of a decorative embroidery, Mrs. Harbeson describes three stages of the process: the first is the preparation of the design, which in her work is always pictorial. Of this feature she says, "I always stylize them which is necessary to the quaintness of the method and all the connotations of this decorative art." After preparing a water color cartoon the picture is drawn on the material, but not in color, which is worked up as the embroidery develops from what she aptly terms her "palette of wools." The second stage is the selection of the background. The third is the yarn, and this important factor is best described in her own words, "For textures that will express my themes, I hunt high and low and combine in one piece of stitchery several qualities and varieties of worsteds. Worsteds may absorb or reflect, sink or rise. My pictures are three-dimensional, and this quality in yarn, its marvelous running shadows, makes possible the effects of graduated light. I search also for pleasing colors, and often fade them in the sun to get the desired tone, and sometimes I dye the natural yarn. The final episode is the stitches. By means of them I aim to express both movement and emotion, using them like brush strokes. They may be open—for which an unusual chain stitch is often used where a lacy effect is needed—or they may be closed or massed. In any case shadows travel along the direction of the stitches, whatever they may be, and produce a variety of tone."

The accompanying illustrations show more clearly than any written word the distinctive quality of this artist's work in which the charm is so akin to that found in romantic figure subjects of French medieval embroideries.

The reaction to Mrs. Harbeson's work is aptly described in the following paragraph: "No one can examine Mrs. Harbeson's delightful panels



PLATE V—THE GARDEN OF LOVE.

EMBROIDERY IN FINE WOOLS ON PALE PINK LINEN. COLORS: TONES OF ROSE, YELLOW AND GRAY GREENS, PALE BLUE AND WHITES. SIMPLE TECHNIQUE TO GIVE RHYTHM AND SPIRIT TO THE DESIGN. PRIVATELY OWNED (1932).



PLATE VI—THE SOUL AND HIS DESTINY.  
SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC.

DINING-ROOM WALL HANGING. EMBROIDERY IN FINE WOOL ON CHERRY COLORED VELVET. COLORS: PEACH, AMETHYST, DARK GREEN, AND LIGHT CORAL TONES. STITCHES: CHAIN, BUTTONHOLE, BLANKET, CROSS, RUMANIAN, AND SATIN. ORIGINAL OWNED BY MRS. BROWNELL GRANT (1933).

GEORGIANA BROWN HARBESON, A PAINTER IN NEEDLEWORK

without perceiving that she brings to her work a fresh, crisp genius. Her fancy is exuberant, but her composition controls it and is a language of communication between her and her public. Her gift for abstraction is of incalculable value in her translation of stories into stitchery and gives to her work a naïveté which is altogether refreshing.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Helen Johnson Keyes—*The Christian Science Monitor*, July 26, 1933.



“RECOGNITION OF USSR.”

EMBROIDERED PANEL BY MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.

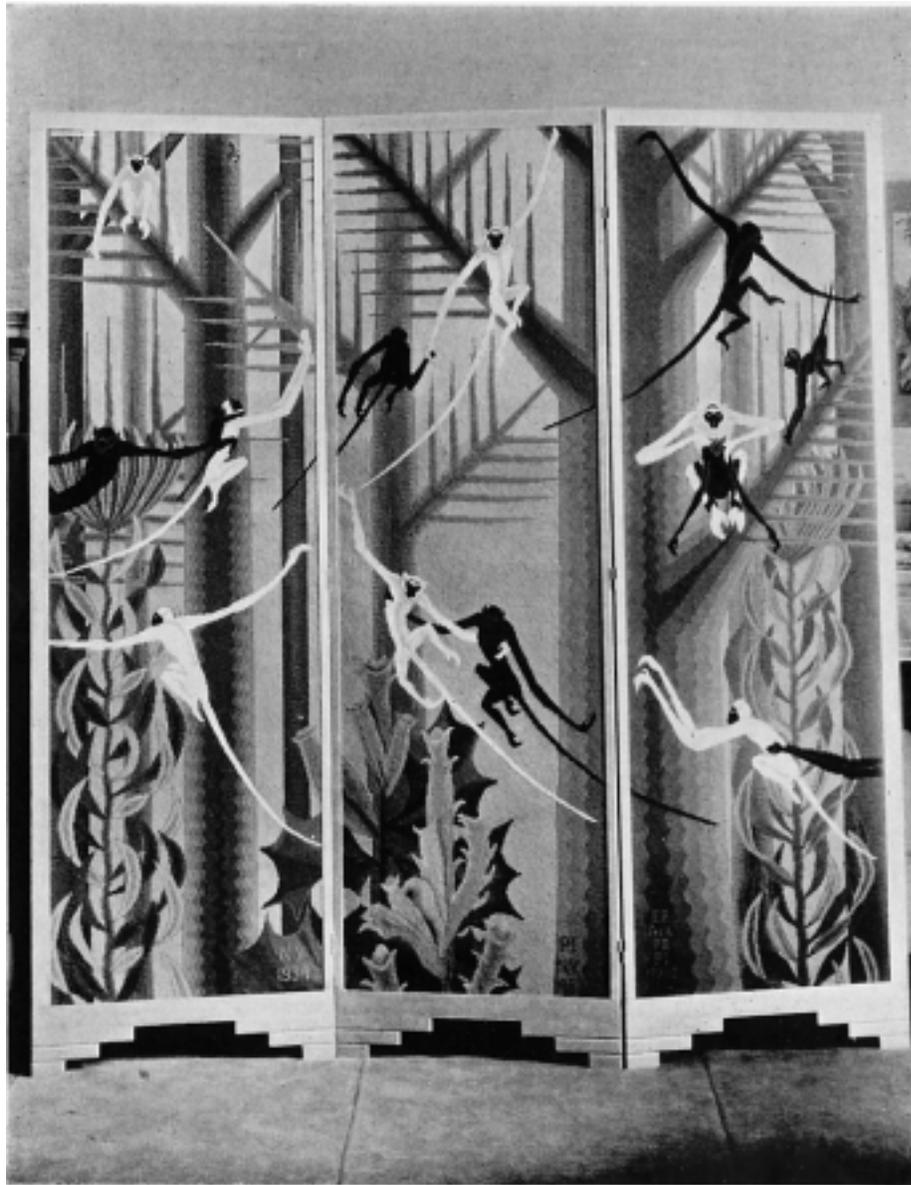


PLATE VII.

THREEFOLD NEEDLEPOINT SCREEN. RHYTHMIC DESIGN OF MONKEYS WORKED IN GRAY WHITES AND GREEN BLACKS. THE COMPOSITION IS BRIGHTENED WITH SHADES OF LIGHT TO DEEP YELLOW GREEN, OLIVE GREEN, GRAY BROWNS, YELLOW OCHER, AND FALL LEAF COLORS. IT IS INITIALED TO INDICATE THE LOCALITIES WHERE IT WAS WORKED—THE PHILIPPINES, PORTO RICO, AND NEW YORK—AND DATED TO SHOW THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK DURING THE THREE YEARS REQUIRED TO MAKE IT.

THE EMBROIDERIES  
*of*  
MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.

*by*  
GEORGIANA BROWN HARBESON

**A**T THE recent exhibition of embroidery held at the Vernay Galleries in New York, the work of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. received the award for the best piece of needlework shown. This definite recognition of fine craftsmanship and sure artistry by the jury of award, is stimulating to interest in the art of needlework. The outstanding qualities of Mrs. Roosevelt's work are originality in conception—which each of her panels shows; certain departures from tradition in the mixing of stitches to suit the movements of her designs; and the designs themselves: all interestingly modern in thought as well as in form.

The moods of her work are as varied and contrasting as her wide travels, and as universal in character. The range is as delightfully wide in theme as in technique. Her enthusiasm for work is so great that in order not to rush through a panel too rapidly and without proper consideration and study of values, another work of contrasting movement is carried along at the same time.

Upon my visit to Mrs. Roosevelt at Oyster Bay I found the pacifying work to be a portrait of Buddha worked in tones of calm grays, expressing the bas relief quality and intensive placidity of a fragment of Oriental sculpture, an intelligent procedure not only to balance opposites in composition but removing the tediousness of too much anxious attention upon an effort.

“The sampler depicting a hunting expedition of my husband, is my fondest expression in needlework,” explained Mrs. Roosevelt, “because it was the most difficult one to accomplish accurately. Each evening



PLATE VIII.

PETIT POINT SAMPLER RECORDING ANIMALS HUNTED DURING MR. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.'S VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS. DISTINCTIVE FOR ACCURATE PORTRAITS OF SKETCHED ANIMALS. HUNGARIAN STITCH HEIGHTENS MOUNTAINS.

Mr. Roosevelt would examine the animal I had worked upon during the day, offering constructive and anatomical criticism until we had arrived at the proper effect for each animal. For instance, the Tamaraw, native to the Philippines, and now extinct, was worked out from a head in his collection. The body had to be designed from memory." That is where artistry travels hand in hand with imagination, supported by the always necessary research.

The Biblical quotation which stimulated the idea for another panel of tribute to Mr. Roosevelt—"Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills," depicts him skipping across mountain tops with the greatest of ease. I thought his very red beard was a bit of fantasy, but Mrs. Roosevelt told me the beard was authentic as he actually grows a red one on his expeditions.

There is humor in many of the panels as well as poetry of movement and thought. These qualities are well expressed in one of her panels which shows a market scene with gay figures. In this embroidery, the stitches present an interesting contrast. The main theme is worked in *Petit Point*. The tree leaves are done in long, leaf-like, flat satin stitches in crewel stitch technique. This departure from tradition was explained by Mrs. Roosevelt as an invention to relieve tediousness. "I became tired of working continuously with the needlepoint stitch, it seemed to be flat and lifeless, so I made up a stitch that galloped." And that is just what happens to this panel, for this dynamic touch in stitchery places the leaves away from the background, gives conviction to the form, and vitality to the movement of the design.

The decorative high moment of Mrs. Roosevelt's embroideries is the large threefold monkey screen. This is a beautiful rhythmic creation worked out in *gros point*. The colorings establish great vibration in the harmonious scaling of the varying tones of blue and green. These uprights of color columns are swept across in half circle flow by contrasting the white, green, and black of the design of swinging monkeys. The screen is framed in flat silver. Although quite modern, yet it is placed at one end of the large dining-room of the Roosevelt home, where, in the company of conservative antiques it "goes." There is a relationship to the many fine decorative lacquered pieces of Oriental design in the Roosevelt home which makes a good modern feel in place. This is due to the fact that so much of what is termed modern design is culled from

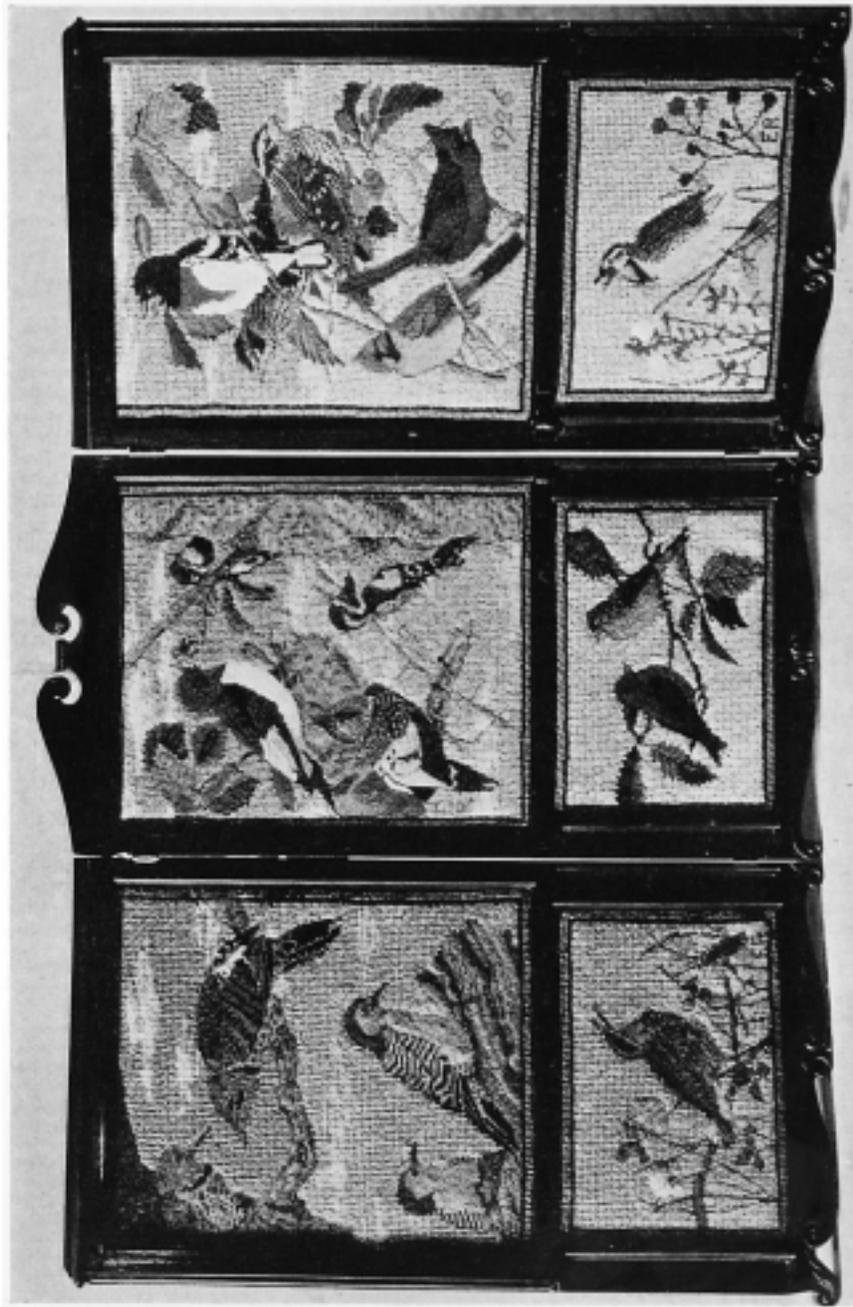


PLATE IX.  
MINIATURE TABLE SCREEN. GOLD STAR AWARD, 1934. BIRD DESIGN ADAPTED FROM OLD PRINTS AND WORKED WHILE IN VERMONT TO CHECK COLORINGS. THE REDS, YELLOWS, AND DARK GREEN OF LEAVES MAKE GAY CONTRAST IN FINE STITCHES TO THE LARGE STITCH BACKGROUND OF CERULEAN BLUE.

THE EMBROIDERIES OF MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.

the art of the Asiatics. While the screen panels may relate in feeling to Oriental or tropical forms, the technique belongs to the West. The Oriental seemed to express needlework, decoratively, in the flowing, flat stitches which found their way to us in the crewel stitch technique. Here, it is interesting to observe, that the mechanical limitation of the needlepoint stitch has given way to a satisfying movement and flow through the happy marriage of good design and excellent color blendings.

While Mrs. Roosevelt has adapted some of her works from the sketches of an artist, she has contributed much from her own feeling and experiences which the medium of needlework requires. These contributions introduced the changes in the designs which have resulted in a lovely personal and artistic success.

Great difficulty was met while working on a panel in the Philippines. Color was difficult to match when it had to be imported from far-away England. In one instance the particular robin's egg blue of the shade desired for the sky effect in the design was found to have turned to a yellowish tinge before the second half of the panel was completed. The untiring and sincere effort which Mrs. Roosevelt put into her work caused her to rip out unhesitatingly every bit of the offending coloring, substituting a reliable blue which has proved wearable. Such thoroughness is a great asset toward the perpetuation of the fine tradition which embroidery has held through the ages.

In order adequately to express the thought of our age, with due regard for that long line of illustrious works in artistic embroidery which have endured through the centuries, we need to use great thought and care in the selectivity of our quota. It seems to me that Mrs. Roosevelt is doing just that. Already there are some twenty-five needlework panels to her credit, and judging from the plans she is making for future work her contributions should be particularly interesting. Her designs will be drafted from small sketches of incident, personal experience and observation; and the result, I feel sure, will be of historical value in the study of American needlework. In pleasant anticipation, we hope we may have the opportunity to see these completed designs next season, at a one-man show of Mrs. Roosevelt's work in a New York gallery.



PLATE X—THE CIRCUS.

WOOL EMBROIDERED PANEL BY MARGUERITE ZORACH. WORK IN SCINTILLATING COLORINGS ON NEUTRAL LINEN BACKGROUND. EXHIBITED AT THE FIRST MUNICIPAL ART EXHIBITION IN THE FORUM GALLERIES, ROCKEFELLER CENTER.

## THE FOUR MODERNS IN AMERICA, EXPONENTS OF THE NEWER EMBROIDERY

*by*

GEORGIANA BROWN HARBESON

IT IS interesting to embroiderers, and to those familiar with the history of needlework throughout the ages, to note that the four moderns represented in this expression of art have chosen the medium of crewel embroidery for their contemporary designs. In contrast to canvas stitches there is a definite reason for this. It permits greater flow and rhythm in the variety of stitches. The ever desirable third dimension may be found in the shadow underlying the removed threads. This may be stressed in accenting the round edge of a tree trunk or lost flatly if the stitches are united as in flat canvas stitches. In the former case one depends upon the thread speaking for itself as a quality. In needlepoint, threads are massed and have to depend upon color shading to indicate movement. Herein lies a deep difference.

Individuality in design is also more clearly portrayed in crewel work. The idea played with is more closely related to the personality of the worker and accords to the use and play made of the selected stitches. Again comes the infinite variety obtainable, with which to tune in the harmony desired for the composition. In the exact requirements of canvas work this is not possible. Freedom to invent for oneself is almost nil.

The "needlepainting" of these four artists has been arrived at through the feeling that this medium is an excellent expression for the design, as it may interpret in purest decorative form as opposed to the realism of reproductive painting.

Crewel work may be lyric, allowing the artist freedom in technique and movement without conveying or creating weariness. In this age of

streamline endeavor it seems appropriate to choose the swift effects and spirit obtainable through this medium.

Simplicity added to movement, thought, and idea, selective and representative of our day, with a broad technique, is shown in the work of these artists, and in contrast to the work of their predecessors. These differences are cultivated, of course, with the age-old fundamental truths as a foundation, which concern good craftsmanship and respect for the laws of natural growth, mixed with good taste and the creativeness which makes good design.

Each of the four modern needlepainters referred to in this article have arrived at their individual expression by way of serious training in art as the necessary preparation for their work. Each has had a one-man show in a New York art gallery, in some cases more than one. One has achieved a group of thirty pictures which are shown in museums throughout the country. This calls attention to the seriousness and dignity to be realized in embroidery as a medium of pure art. It comes into its own when the trained artist takes into her own hands the actual technical working out of her idea. In the past, many painters of renown have drawn cartoons and relegated the carrying through of the design to those less gifted with vision. It is the feeling of the writer that herein lies error in that the indefinable touch of personality, dream, vision, or instant selectivity is lost. A work of art, in all instances, is truest when labored through by the artist who conceives the idea.

There is great contrast in the work of the embroiderers herein discussed, although all used identical stitches in their expression. Each is original and modern, and each one has condensed her technique into the idea and design which has been her experience in either fact or dream. Thus is created the individual quality which gives distinction to an artist's work.

Invention is employed to a certain extent, adaptation and arranged pattern noted, in "The Circus" panel of Marguerite Zorach. The pattern predominates and has interested the artist primarily—uniformity is stressed by the use of one stitch almost entirely—an open Cretan stitch, finely worked. Spaces left are filled in with groups of chain and lines of backstitch. This almost covers the linen entirely, which Mrs. Zorach likes to do. Occasionally an area is left open, like a breath of air, but dotted with fillings of cross or satin stitch patterns before it escapes or



PLATE XI.

EMBROIDERED WALL PICTURE BY MISS MARCIA STEBBINS. NEUTRAL COLORINGS ON ECRU LINEN;  
WHITES, GRAYS, AND DARK GREENS PREDOMINATING.



PLATE XII—DIANA.

PANEL BY MARY ELLEN CRISP. WOOL EMBROIDERY ON LINEN. THE HORSE AND RIDER ARE WORKED IN WARM LIGHT TONES; THE DOGS AND TREES IN TONES OF GOLD AND BROWN WITH BLUE GREEN TREES IN THE BACKGROUND. THE TREES IN THE FOREGROUND ARE WORKED IN TONES OF RED AND TERRA-COTTA.

#### THE FOUR MODERNS IN AMERICA

leaves a bare feeling in the composition. Mrs. Zorach works entirely in this all over modern technique, and always on linen.

Using linen also, but leaving her backgrounds free as part of the design scheme, Marcia Stebbins, a newcomer in the field, allows her stitchery to suggest movement, lyrically maintaining simple technique with chain, backstitch, and coarse stitchery. Her work gives delightful airiness and poetic feeling. In the boating panel shown, one senses the joy of the occasion interpreted. Again the shadow from the heavier wool threads gives the third dimension depth while the lines of chain stitch clouds wreath about in definite evolution in a manner that painted lines simply could not suggest. All of Miss Stebbins' panels possess this same spirited charm, conveying her love of the subject and a real appreciation of her technical problem, especially in the joy released in the pattern upon the fishes. These are imaginative sprees and amusing.

Mrs. Arthur Crisp brings to her work more classicalism in design. Being the wife of an architectural mural painter no doubt influences her feeling and appreciation of the formalized rendering. She loves the country and hunting dogs so it is natural to see her dream expression turning toward Diana. Like Mrs. Zorach, she "sees" her linen background covered completely in tapestry manner. Her stitch selection is different, however, having a preference for a little looser technique, and an over and over satin stitch worked in rows on the horse, dogs, and figure. There is greater variety in the introduction of buttonhole, Cretan, back chain, and outline stitches used. The all over design is composed far differently from that of either of the preceding artists, but the effort to obtain movement is related, and again is shown the individual personal touch from the artist's own storehouse of cultivated information.

Approaching movement from another angle is the decorative panel, "The Enchanted Isle," of the writer.<sup>1</sup> The differences are in the use of heavy blue green taffetas as a background, the balancing of the design flowing around and into a center unit. Here is an attempt to express the mood of repose in the midst of action. The clouds move out placidly behind the tree in contrast to those in Miss Stebbins' panel. The water is similar in expression of line, but the stitch in the writer's panel is a flowing backstitch suggesting smoothness of flow. Miss Stebbins' is chain stitchery suggesting the choppiness of Maine water. Again Miss Stebbins'

<sup>1</sup> Plate III, Page 6.

panel is more the expression of the place observed, and actually seen, whereas the writer's panel was a place ideally imagined and created from fantasy plus certain observation.

The sketches used stress rhythm of the object to be expressed. The chain stitches used for the trees are of blended green, and drooped to convey the effect of overlapping leaves. The buttonhole stitchery in the garland border is worked loosely to give action of growth and flow of pattern, but also to allow some value of the blue taffeta background to blend through the open stitches of pale corals and blue pink wools to create scintillation.

It may be interesting to note that "The Enchanted Isle" panel was conceived and created in my New York studio, the writer never having had the pleasure of visiting that enchanting spot. This panel was purchased by The Academy of Fine Arts in Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, for its related feeling to the island.

So in following through the mood idea, and the feeling of the moment, we may find in needlework exhibits of today a genuine release for the creation of works of art. Following the command of an able technique, love and enthusiasm may do wonders in evolving patterns, employing those which have been garnered from the past in combination with the new materials and ideas of the present period.

The movement has begun with the efforts of these four moderns in America. May the ranks grow and the quality develop so that future generations may receive inspiration from our results.

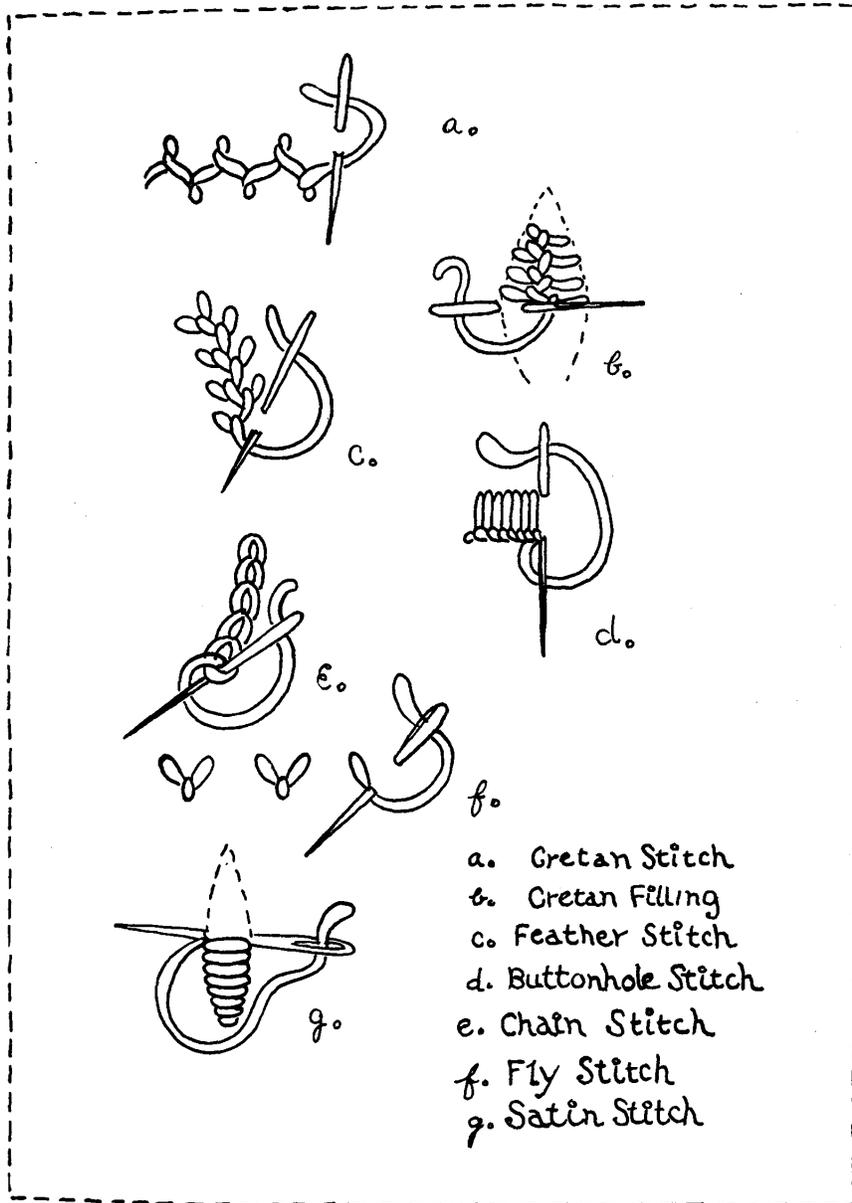


PLATE XIII.

STITCHES MOST UNIVERSALLY USED IN THE EXECUTION OF PANELS ILLUSTRATED  
 IN THE WORK OF THE FOUR MODERN NEEDLEPAINTERS.



PLATE XIV.

NEEDLEPOINT CHAIR DESIGNED AND WORKED BY MRS. DARRAGH PARK. AWARDED MOST POPULAR EXHIBIT 1935 "NEEDLEWORK OF TODAY" SHOW. WOOL FLOWERS, SILK FLOSS BACKGROUND.

## NOTES ON THE EXHIBITION "NEEDLEWORK OF TODAY" AT THE VERNAY GALLERIES

*by*

GEORGIANA BROWN HARBESON

THAT modern women have become aware of the tremendous possibilities which lie in the dignified and ancient art of needlework is exemplified in the exhibition "Needlework of Today" held at the Vernay Galleries in New York this spring. The strong trend toward self-expression in new forms is indicated in this second showing of the foresighted group who sponsored the exhibition given for the benefit of the New York Association of the Blind, Lighthouse No. 1, and the "Adopt a Family" Committee.

Under the able leadership of Mrs. William W. Hoppin, this second exhibition, of more than seven hundred entries, was gathered from the homes of prominent women from all over the country. It was an intelligent and artistic expression not only of their decorative ideas but also of more practical ones as well.

An embroidered panel by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., "Recognition of USSR" (Plate shown on page 11), was awarded the gold star for the best piece of work in the exhibit. The most popular piece in the show, a chair by Mrs. Darragh Park (Plate XIV) has an oyster white floss background, with flowers done in a higher key of white wool accented by the shaded boxwood greens of the leaves. The flowers are contained in pale turquoise blue bowls, while the entire color scheme is bound together by touches of bluish paint in the chair frame.

The first place in wall hangings was given to Mrs. C. W. Smith for a piece of crewel embroidery (Plate XV) depicting biblical scenes in a variety of stitches and showing an intelligent combination of Chinese and Jacobean elements in the design.



PLATE XV.

FIRST PRIZE IN WALL HANGINGS. BIBLICAL SCENES.  
CREWEL EMBROIDERY WORKED BY MRS. C. W. SMITH.



PLATE XVI.

FIRST PRIZE IN PICTURE CLASS. CREWEL EMBROIDERED "THE NATIVITY,"  
WORKED BY MISS S. B. MACDONALD AFTER DESIGN BY GEORGIANA  
BROWN HARBESON.



PLATE XVII.

CREWEL EMBROIDERED PANEL, DESIGNED AND WORKED BY MARY LOW WILLIAMS. AWARDED SECOND PRIZE FOR DISTINCTIVENESS IN MODERNIZING A SAMPLER THEME.



PLATE XVIII.

FIRST PRIZE IN BENCH CLASS. CREWEL EMBROIDERED COVERING DESIGNED AND  
WORKED BY MRS. HUBERT ROGERS. RADIATION IN STITCHERY OF INTEREST.

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Miss S. B. Macdonald's picture "The Nativity" (Plate XVI) was awarded the first place in that class. The colorings are of enamel brilliancy against a deep blue linen background. The shepherds are worked in warm brown tones; the Wise Men in oriental golds, yellows, and crimson shades; the trees in rich green wools shading into light turquoise blue. The little angels, as well as the Madonna and Christ Child, are embroidered in pale pink and deep rose tones. Second place was awarded to Miss Mary Low Williams for her picture of a leaping gazelle (Plate XVII) executed mainly in blues and greens, but with a pink flamingo and an autumn bush as contrast.

Others winning first places in this exhibit were: Mrs. Darragh Park, mirrors; Mrs. A. Beller, crewel embroidered screen; Mrs. J. Gordon Douglas, armorial wall panel; Mrs. Kenneth Budd, pole screen; Mrs. R. Swinnerton, purse; Mrs. Grover O'Neil, bell pull; Mrs. Curtis McGraw, box; Mrs. Hubert Rogers, bench; Mrs. Thomas LaFarge, chair; Mrs. Matthew E. Fleming, mules; Mrs. Thomas Bancroft, footstool; Mrs. Kenneth Budd, maps; Mrs. Courtland D. Barnes, rug; Mrs. Brewster Jennings, tea-table; Mrs. James Field, backgammon table; Mrs. Robert Coleman Taylor, samplers; Miss Angelica L. Gerry, ecclesiastical panel; Lady Gosford, cushion; Mrs. Arthur Peck, dolls' chairs; Miss Madeleine F. Butt, children's class.

Second places went to the following: Mrs. E. M. daC. Andrade, needlepoint crest; Mrs. John Castle, pole screens; Miss Mary Steers, bag; Mrs. Charles H. Keep, bench; Mrs. H. Bradley Martin, chair; Mrs. M. G. Wood, footstool; Mrs. F. Bonnell, rug; Mrs. John Gregory, wall piece; Mrs. Lawrence B. Cummings, sampler; Mrs. DeLancy Kountze, cushion; Mrs. John DeWitt Peltz, dolls' chairs; Miss Polly Jennings, children's class.

Three third prizes were also awarded: the first to Mrs. Ingeborg Hanscell for her wall hanging; another to Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., for her sampler; and the third to Mrs. Lewis M. Gibb for her cushion.

## THE TAPESTRIES OF JEAN LURÇAT

*from notes made by*

JEANNE BOUCHER

THE SO-CALLED "tapestries" of Jean Lurçat, of which "L'Orage" (Plate XIX) is a magnificent example, have been exhibited in America during the last few years at the Toledo Museum and the Brooklyn Museum; and in Paris at the Galerie Georges Petit. Most of his work has been acquired by private collectors in Paris, but there are also some pieces owned by collectors in New York and California.

Lurçat's method of work is distinctly individual, and the result of many years of experimentation. In the first place, his tapestries are not woven on a tapestry loom, but are embroidered in gros point on canvas. This was, at least, the technique observed in a piece seen in New York a few years ago, and Lurçat's own description of his work suggests that all his panels are produced in the same way. The artist, then, prepares no preliminary cartoon or colored sketch, but draws the design directly on canvas of the required size, thus eliminating the necessity for any subsequent alterations in scale by the worker. He uses about two hundred colors of wool, and this number he constantly reduces, for he considers it too great. Lurçat conceives his designs as a mosaic of colors and carries this in his mind, for the various colors are indicated only by numerals on the areas of the canvas where they are to be used. The worker's only guide, therefore, is the outline of the design on the canvas and the numerals, showing what colors are to be employed, and these he is compelled to follow. There is thus no intermediate step, in the form of a sketch, between the complete idea in Lurçat's mind and the finished tapestry, while many of the panels designed by Lurçat are the work of his wife. For large hangings several workmen were employed, each doing a section, and this increases the rapidity with which the work is done. The



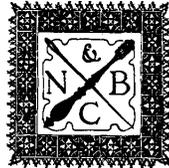
PLATE XIX.—L'ORAGE.  
EMBROIDERY IN GROS POINT BY JEAN LURÇAT.

#### THE TAPESTRIES OF JEAN LURÇAT

artist believes that in these impatient days one cannot spend years on one piece of work, and adds, "*donnez-moi la Muraille de Chine et une armée adéquate. En six mois j'aurai tout couvert.*"

Lurçat has been inspired especially by the great tapestries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and he deplores the results which the domination of painting has produced in the tapestries made since the sixteenth century. He recognizes that, in part at least, the decline of tapestries as wall decoration is due to the fact that the distinctive differences in design and technique between a tapestry, or a composition in wool, and a composition in oil paint have been lost to view.

Although these embroidered hangings are distinctly "modern" in design, many of the technical conventions of rendering such details as the water (with waves) in the middle ground are precisely the same as those found in many seventeenth century English embroideries. The pattern, both of design and color, is carried from top to bottom of the panel as is most fitting for wall decorations of this sort. The color itself is fresh without being garish or startling and the number of different surface patterns shows considerable ingenuity.



## CLUB NOTES

*The Nineteenth Annual Meeting* of the Needle and Bobbin Club was held at the residence of Mrs. Walter B. James, 7 East 70th Street, on Wednesday, February 20, at three o'clock.

At four o'clock Mrs. Mildred Stapley Byne gave an informal talk on Spanish Woven Fabrics and Embroideries, using as illustrative material pieces from her private collection which were supplemented by a group of Spanish fabrics and rich brocades lent by Mr. H. A. Elsberg. Mrs. Byne who has lived in Madrid for many years has made a careful study of the weaving techniques and embroideries of the country and has published an authoritative volume on the work of the different districts; her long residence in Spain enabled her to create a vivid background for her description of its people and the important part that fabrics play in the domestic life of the peasant. At the close of lecture when refreshments were served many of the members availed themselves of the opportunity of meeting Mrs. Byne.

*Exhibition of Embroideries* by Messrs. French & Company. On March 22nd and 23rd members of the Club were invited by Messrs. French & Company to view an important Gold Embroidered Triptych of the early sixteenth century which was the centre of attraction in a beautiful collection of embroideries placed on exhibition at this time.

*Club Luncheon.* On Tuesday, March 26, the annual luncheon of the Club was held in the Assembly Room of the Cosmopolitan Club. The tables had their usual decoration of spring blossoms and the east wall

#### CLUB NOTES

of the room was hung with an exhibition of samplers from the collection of Mrs. Henry E. Coe and those of other members. On the opposite side of the room there was a display of recent handiwork of members. After luncheon, Mrs. Coe gave a delightful talk on samplers and some of the important ones in her own collection.

*Lecture on Medieval Saracenic Costume* by Dr. L. A. Mayer, Professor of Near Eastern Art and Archaeology in the University of Jerusalem. The Club was unusually fortunate in being able to hear Professor Mayer whose stay in New York was too brief to permit of his making lecture engagements. He illustrated his subject with lantern slides of medieval manuscripts showing costumes and Near Eastern fabrics in museum and private collections. A résumé of Dr. Mayer's lecture will be published in a forthcoming number of the BULLETIN.

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