



Blackwork Journey Blog

December 2023



New Project
for 2024





Christmas is coming!

The weeks leading up to Christmas are always exciting for Blackwork Journey and one of the highlights of my year is the “Knitting & Stitching Show” held in Harrogate, UK. Not only is it a chance to stock up on my needlework supplies and see what is new, but it is a chance to see the work of leading textile artists and groups in the “Textiles Gallery” showcase.

This year “Hand and Lock” were exhibiting some of their outstanding student work and I would like to focus on this exhibition this month.



86 Margaret Street, London, United Kingdom

Hand and Lock have 250 years of experience embellishing, embroidering and monogramming garments for the Royal family, the military and fashion houses including Dior, Hermes and Louis Vuitton.

“The Hand & Lock Prize for Embroidery was established in 2000, aspiring to provide passionate and emerging embroiderers with a vital platform to showcase their talents and gain life-changing exposure. We believe that it is fundamental to acknowledge and support contemporary embroidery talent, recognising the importance of craft within today’s culture and society, and solidifying that recognition for future generations to come” Jessica Pile, Hand & Lock Director

The annual “Hand & Lock Prize for Embroidery” was established in 2000 to promote the fine art of embroidery. It is now a global competition with entries from over 40 different countries. Providing aspiring

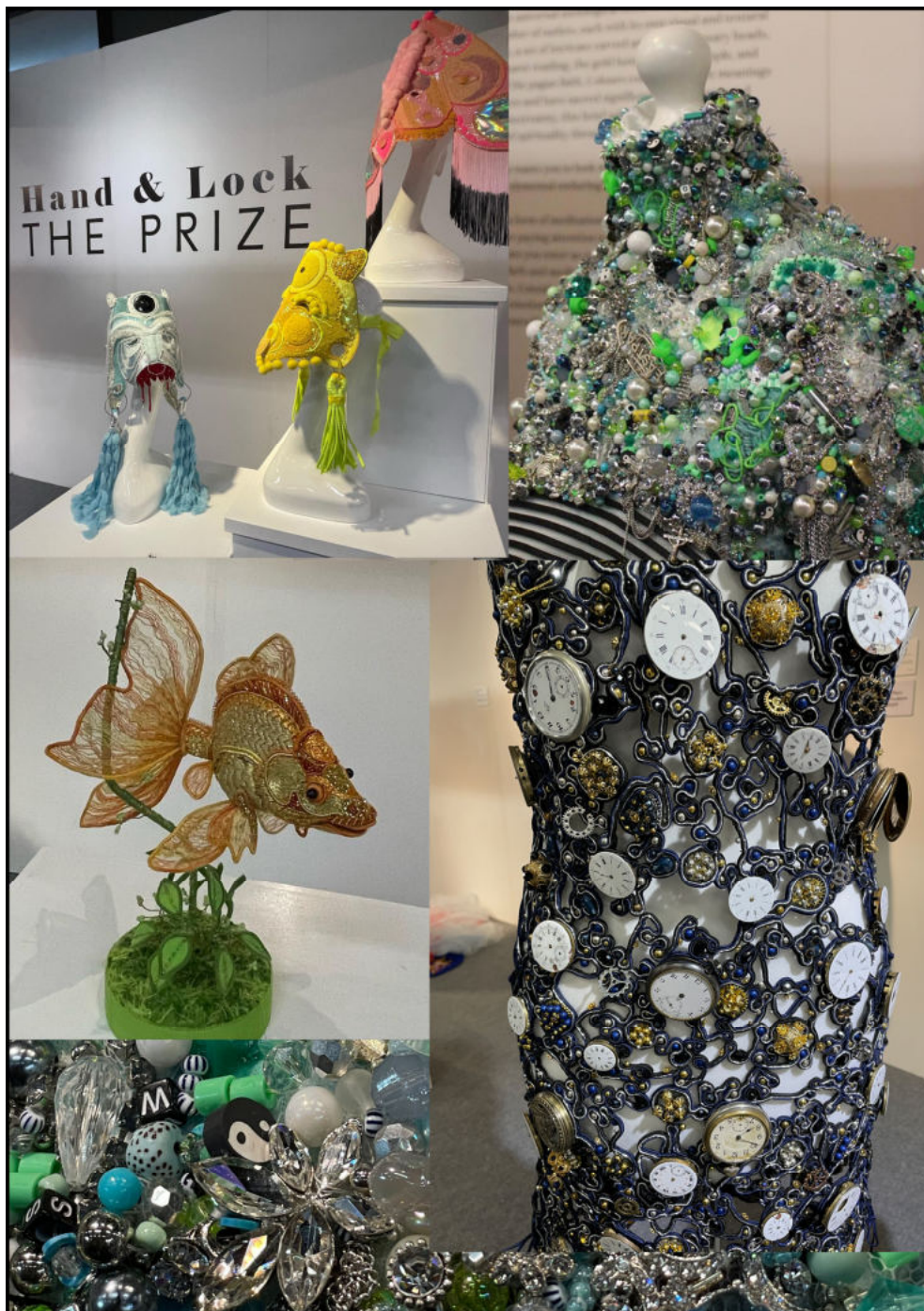
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embroidery students and designers an opportunity to showcase their talents and gain vital exposure and experience. They receive hundreds of entries from fashion students and talented embroiderers from all over the world. Some of the former winners have gone on to start their own successful businesses, work in the industry for top design houses and even join the team at Hand & Lock.

In recent years it has been expanded to include textile artists, interior and accessory designers as well as those working in fashion. The competition strives to highlight the exquisite craftsmanship and skill that goes into this intricate craft and bring together the whole embroidery community to celebrate. To read the brief in full is really interesting and appealed to me as an active designer and embroiderer.

2023 Brief Modern Mystic Arts and the Power of Colour

<https://handembroidery.com/the-prize/prize-brief/>





I particularly appreciated the attention to detail, the dense beading and use of both hand and machine embroidery. This was reflected across the show by a number of different designers and is relevant to the work I do within Blackwork Journey.



Grace Gatley, UK
"Cathedral"

There is a pdf available to download of all the exhibitors and their work at;

<https://handembroidery.com/app/uploads/2023/08/2023-Brochure-Prize-WEBSITE.pdf>

It makes very interesting reading with some excellent photographs of the work, so why not get a coffee and relax for a few minutes and enjoy the pdf!

One piece that really appealed to me in the Hand and Lock exhibition was the work by Emily Barnett

The Chawton House Project - Emily Barnett UK

Emily was trained at Royal School of Needlework.



This project consists of three hand embroidered wall panels inspired by the grounds of Chawton House, Hampshire in the UK.

As a student, Emily was employed at Chawton House and these pieces were created in response to the colours and beauty she discovered there - a spirituality which filled her soul with a sense of wonder. Watching the gardens change through the rhythm of the seasons deepened her relationship with nature, making her feel both alive and at peace. Emily has developed these themes in her work through a careful choice of colours and textures, combining art with historical women's writing by using books from the library collection as a point of reference.



Extracts from the Chawton House project

Next month I will focus on Jan Beaney and Jean Littlejohn who were exhibiting "Rhythms and Reflections" at the Knitting & Stitching Show and goldwork preparation by students from the Royal School of Needlework.

Confidence building

The end of the year seems an appropriate time to look back and to look forward to 2024. After teaching embroidery for over 50 years, the lack of confidence that some embroiderers have in their work and their approach to embroidery still concerns me. The reaction “I can’t do that” or “I’m no good” or “I will never be able to do that!” is something I regularly meet.

I spend a lot of time reassuring and encouraging students and I have noticed that it has become more obvious since the Covid pandemic. Self-confidence is the belief that you can trust in yourself and your abilities and when this is lacking, even making simple decisions such as choosing colours, starting a new project or exploring a new technique can be a serious problem for some.

Whilst the problem seems to be more common with some of the older members who appear less certain as they grow older, it is also found amongst some of the younger members who are trying new ideas for the first time.

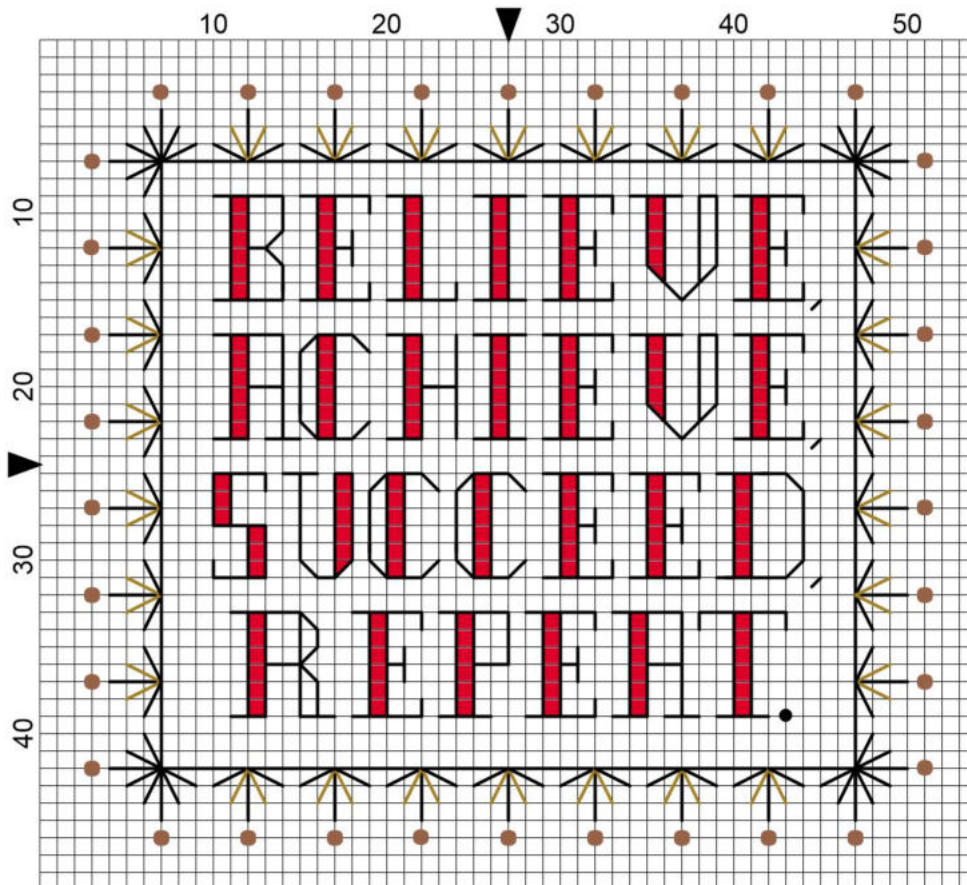
I think there is often a tendency to underestimate just what we know and doubt our abilities, rather than taking a positive viewpoint. The feeling of self-confidence can be very rewarding as it makes us happier and healthier and gives us the ability to tackle challenges.

I have a mantra, a saying that I have used over the years when I have been uncertain about where to go and how to work a project through. It is very simple: ***Believe, Achieve, Succeed, Repeat.***



I decided that I would make an embroidery of the saying for my granddaughter who is at university doing a five year veterinary science course and I thought I would also share it with you as my Christmas gift to the readers of Blackwork Journey!

I hope you enjoy making it and that you find the saying useful!



Legend:	■ [2] DMC-310 ANC-403 DLE- black	■ [2] DMC-666 ANC-46 DLE- christmas red - br
Backstitch Lines:	— DLE-E3852 Dark Gold	— DMC-310 black
French Knots:	● DMC-310 black	
Beads:	● MHG-557 Mill Hill Glass Beads-Gold	

Believe, Achieve, Succeed, Repeat

Design Area: 3.57 x 3.21 inches,

Stitches: 50 x 45 stitches

The design can be worked with a border or mounted over two card circles 4.50 inches. Old cd's can also be used for mounting.

Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida 7 x 7 inches.

If the embroidery is to be mounted over card thin wadding, backing fabric 7 x 7 inches, ribbon or cord for hanger and strong thread for drawing up will be needed.

Threads: DMC stranded floss

DMC 310 Black, one skein

DMC 666 Christmas red, one skein

Mill Hill glass beads: MHG 557 Gold, one packet

Tapestry needle No.24

Small embroidery rung or hoop

Stitches:

Back stitch - one strand

Cross stitch - two strands

Straight stitch - one strand

French or Colonial knots - two strands



Method:

1. Fold the fabric into quarters to find the centre point. Work each line of letters in turn. Work the cross stitch first and outline with back stitch (one strand). Move on to the next line.
2. Once the letters have been embroidered add the border (optional).
3. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.
4. Mount the embroidery in a card from or over a card circle. Glue a fine layer of wadding to the card circle first.
5. Backing – draw a circle of backing fabric up over the card using a strong thread. To add a Suffolk pull. Cut a 5 inch circle of fabric. Work a running stitch round the edge and pull tight to draw up the puff. Stitch a button to the centre of the puff and glue or stitch to the background circle. Add the cord hanger and slip stitch the two pieces together.

Enjoy!

Suffolk puff backing

They are believed to have originated in Suffolk, England in the 1600's. The puffs were made of old fabrics and recycled into quilts by agricultural workers.

They're also referred to as Yorkshire daisies in the UK, as fuxico in Brazil and yoyo's in the USA.





Making a Suffolk puff cushion or quilt:

Suffolk puffs are a good way of using scraps of fabric and can be used to make quilts, cards, brooches and wreaths.

Vintage Suffolk puff quilts are very expensive and hard to find, so consider making your own heirloom quilt from the scraps you all have in your stash. It takes a lot of puffs to make a quilt so start on a small project first. Charity shops can be a treasure trove for inexpensive fabrics.

1. To use Suffolk puffs for a quilt draw round a card circle template on the wrong side of the fabric. The templates can be any size depending on the final product. For a quilt I would use 6 inch and 5 inch circles for a double puff. For smaller projects such as brooches or cards use smaller templates 3.50 and 2.50 inches in diameter.

2. Cut out the required number of circles and turn a small hem on each one. Draw up tight and ease the fabric out. If a

button is to be used in the centre it is not necessary to turn a hem. Just draw up the circle with running stitch and tie tightly.

3. Do I stuff a Suffolk puff?

Each puff can be filled with soft polyester wadding for extra warmth. Old quilts were often filled with wool or kapok. Kapok is becoming more popular today as a filling because it is naturally hypo-allergenic and is resistant to mould and mildew.

4. Once a number of puffs have been made slip stitch the puffs together on the top, bottom and sides. Mount the puffs on a backing fabric (optional).

It takes time and patience to make a quilt, but the end result can be very satisfying and is a good example of slow stitching and mindfulness.

The Quilters Guild Collection



This coverlet is made from red, navy, white and grey Suffolk puffs in cotton and silk. This style of patchwork was very popular during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Size - 161cm x 181cm

Maker: Unknown Date: 1900 – 1925

New Design for December CH0438 “Over and Under”

Japanese Kogin style designs are always popular and very effective. A single band can be used to decorate table linen and the motifs can be used for gift tags or cards. Worked on Zweigart 16 count Aida the pattern is worked across the weft of the fabric from side to side.

Use the traditional colours of white on blue or take a modern approach and use colours of your choice!



2024 New Blackwork Project “Triangle Trail” A Dictionary of Blackwork

2024 will see the launch of a new project in Blackwork Journey. The initial idea came from looking at an antique flying geese quilt where the triangles were arranged in rows. There were so many different ways in which the triangles could be arranged that I decided to make a blackwork panel. One thing led to another and “Triangle Trail” was created.

With over 300 different blackwork patterns included it became a reference dictionary of blackwork. Each block will be shown in both colour and black and white with detailed photographs of each section.

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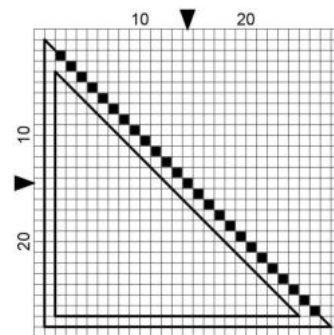
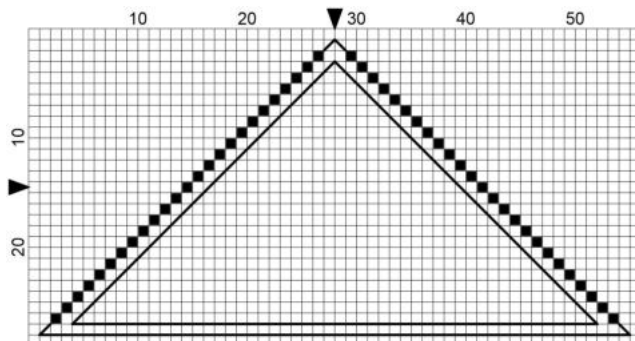
The master panel consists of 65 triangles filled with different 2 - 3 different blackwork patterns in each triangle, 26 quarter triangles, again with more than one pattern included and 72 individual motifs to insert between the triangles.

A number of alternative arrangements will be included so that the embroiderer can choose a small project consisting of just a few triangles, or can complete the whole design!

Fabrics: Zweigart 25 count Lugana, Zweigart 28 count evenweave or Zweigart 14 count Aida. If Aida fabric is used there will be some split stitches.

The embroidery can be worked in a single colour and metallic gold or copper thread or it can be worked in four different colours and metallic threads. Mill Hill gold beads have been added and the triangle cross stitch framework was worked in Cotton P rle No.12.

Early stages, motifs have yet to be added!



Triangle and quarter frameworks

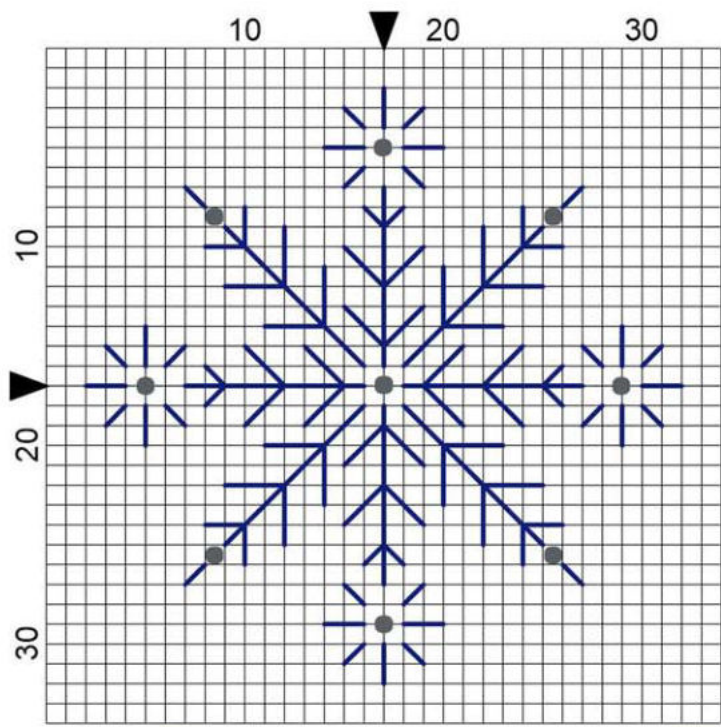
I like a challenge and this has certainly tested my creativity. More information will be revealed in the January 2024 Blog and the Facebook groups.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's Blog and have a peaceful and happy Christmas.

If you have any queries please contact:
lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk

Happy stitching, *Liz*



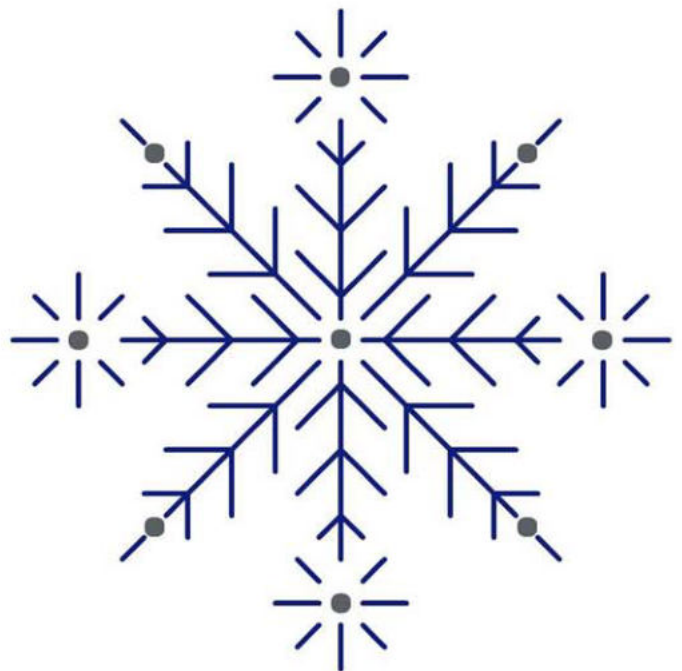


Patterns in nature -Snowflakes

There are two patterns to explore, one is worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave and the other is drawn on to calico.

Pattern in Nature Snowflake 1
 Design Area: 2.14 x 2.14 inches
 Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 5 x 5 inches.
 Stitches used: Back stitch

Snowflake 2
 Fabric: pre-washed calico or cotton 8 x 8 inches
 Thread: 4 strands of floss
 Stitches: Back stitch whipped, chain stitch, beads.
 Method:
 Trace the design on to the fabric using a water-soluble pen or HB pencil.
 Place the finished embroideries face down on a soft towel and press lightly.
 Mount the embroideries over card circles or old CDs.



CH0401 Snowflake Winter
 This design can be found in 'Charts' on the
 Blackwork Journey website.



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