

october news letter 2019

Rabbit hat
designs



www.rabbithatdesigns.com

Welcome to the second ever Rabbit Hat Designs News Letter! Thank you for signing up and being interested in hearing more about my processes and stitching adventures! For this newsletter I wanted to explore the roots of my stitching practice and embroidery in general. After being asked a few times where, when and why I began stitching, it really made me think back to where this all started. Embroidery is such an ancient and beautiful art form that I also wanted to look back at the roots of embroidery and needlework itself and how it's been a part of history for a loooong time. I'm sure this is a bigger project than I can give proper attention to here, but it's a start!

updates

Before delving into the roots of my stitching and wider embroidery history, here are some quick updates; botanic embroideries and kits are now available at Birdsall&Co in Denver including the new honey bee kit, one of my favourites. I love these little critters and how much they do for the ecosystem. The embroideries are just available until January at Birdsall&Co! If



d.i.y Kit

you're reading this from outside of Denver you can get embroideries and kits at my Etsy shop with free shipping in the US (address below). I'm working on making shipping better for worldwide embroidery and nature lovers too! I'm also excited to say I've been asked back

for the Salvage Designs Center holiday craft market. Keep an eye out for updates on my Instagram...



[/rabbithatdesigns](https://www.instagram.com/rabbithatdesigns)

rabbithatdesignsshop.etsy.com



all about roots

The experiences that build who we are and how we come across things that inspire us, is always interesting to me. When thinking about it I realised that my current embroidery adventures sprung up after working on a wolf pack patch for a quilt project with my Winnicott Wednesdays artist collective (www.winnicottwednesdays.weebly.com). I started the patch at a time when I was new to the states and trying to find my feet. Wolves are such wonderful symbols of community,



strength, perseverance and curiosity. I then went on to stitch double animal images rooted in animal symbolism, exploring my two identities, one from the UK and the new one forming in the states before delving into macro nature, echoing my deeper layers of discovery. Both embroidery and tapestry are ancient art forms. Due to their transportable nature, tapestries were also more widely accessible when compared to other forms of art in the past and they have often been a platform for marking historical events, stories and observations of current issues. Embroidery is thought to have started in China. The word 'embroidery' means embellishment from the French word 'broderie' (folklorecompany.com).

Sometimes the idea of embroidery being an embellishment means that it can be seen as an addition or just decoration, but having made embroidery for a little while now, I find it's so much more than that. For starters the rhythm to embroidery has such a tactile and soothing rhythm that I think the process itself can't help but have an embodied and healing element to it. On top of that the layers and patterns you can work with means that each hoop or stitch can hold so much complexity, narrative and depth. Up to the 1900s embroidery in the western world was seen as a pastime mainly for women in the upper classes. During the 1900s it became more widespread. A famous quote by Rozsika Parker goes 'to know the history of embroidery is to know the history of women' (Parker, 1984).



I am yet to read the book, *The Subversive Stitch* (it's on my reading list!), but at a first glance of this quote I'd say as embroidery was mostly seen in upper classes in the western world (of course, it has a vast and varied history in other parts of the world) before the 1900s I feel that this can only be partly true, but I do feel that a big part of women's history and needlework are interlinked. An article by Eileen Wheeler from the Textile Society of America writes about a suffragette's stitching of her experience on a handkerchief while in Holloway prison, during the fight for women's rights in the UK (Wheeler, 2012). Wheeler goes on to explore how this highlighted the contrast of the delicate feminine use of embroidery and the grim circumstances of the political struggle. On a different line of thought, I'd agree with Parker who writes "femininity and sweetness are part of women's strength..." (Parker, 1984)...rather than juxtaposed to it. I think the delicacy needed for stitching and creativity is part of female power, or in fact any power regardless of gender. Needlework is still used as a form of protest today, as Beth Ward writes about in *Bust* magazine's article 'How Women are Using Knitting and Needlework as a Form of Protest' (bust.com, 2018). Whenever I've had conversations about embroidery, the story-telling nature of it comes up and also the handing down of skills from one generation to the next. I love that my mother in law gave cross stitch patterns to my husband and his two brothers when they were kids and I think the love of stitching can be universal. It is so great to see how stitch-artists on Instagram come from all gender identities, binary and non-binary and I hope that embroidery continues to grow as an embraced art form for anyone who is drawn to it.



out and about

Here's where I share listens, reads, film and arts that inspire or interest me. A film that I would recommend is *Suffragette*, which is a great way to learn more about the women involved in the suffragette movement in the UK, especially understanding more about the part that women from different backgrounds played. A podcast I've been listening to is *Endless Thread*,

which talks about bizarre, interesting and popular reddit posts, exploring the surprising layers and stories behind them. For reads, to follow the thread of exploring the roots of tapestry and embroidery, I would recommend the blog post by Sarah Mallory on The Met website called 'Tapestries Report All the News that is Fit to Weave' (metmuseum.org). The other article by Eileen Wheeler that I mention in this newsletter can be found at digitalcommons.unl.edu and the final article can be found at [Bust.com](https://bust.com). The book 'The Subversive Stitch' is written by Rozsina Parker, first published in 1984 by The Women's Press Ltd.



coupons

Get 20% off my embroidery kits on Etsy with the code NEWSLETTERRABBIT, just for this month there's one or two available for each design so you need to order soon if you want one! Enjoy!

thank you for reading

Next month look out for how to satin stitch! Find the how to do a French Knot attached to your email with this newsletter!