A Genealogy of Pictorial Berlin Work: A History of Errors

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ABSTRACT

A Genealogy of Pictorial Berlin Work: A History of Errors

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Concordia University, 2012

This thesis is the outcome of an interdisciplinary process. It was approached and developed within an art practice that is premised on the use and understanding of pictorial embroidery. The investigation into the emergence of Berlin work that is presented here cannot be distinguished from my artwork. The thesis is therefore an exercise in practice-led research and research-based art practice that operates as a genealogy. The method of genealogy allows me to advance knowledge through the investigation of a specific cultural practice that is located in the interplay of various historical forces and that defines needlepoint as an object of discourse. Berlin work emerged in Europe in the early nineteenth century. My research demonstrates that it was a form of product innovation that was associated with enlightenment notions of scientific and cultural progress, and was promoted as an art form modeled on painting. As Berlin work was gradually displaced by modernist conceptions of art, it began its career as a form of "submerged knowledge," considered a "mistaken" art form devoid of aesthetic interest. By focusing on the English context, I offer an account of needlepainting, enlightenment practices of copying, the development of an industrial aesthetic, and the making of the modern amateur as constituent elements of Berlin work. I do so as a means to understand Berlin work in its moment of emergence and to consider what aspects were eclipsed when embroidery began to be thought of in terms of formalism and medium specificity. The methods used in this project offer a novel interpretation of needlepoint. By considering how it is that disciplinary forces have shaped needlepoint as a submerged practice, I provide an unprecedented view of it as more than meets the eye in the contemporary conjuncture. This written thesis accompanies the creation of a micro-archive of research-related materials, artefacts and artworks. Together, the written thesis and the micro-archive are a means for me to develop an art practice that incorporates a reflexive critique of its own making and of the disciplinary regimes of contemporary art.

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Mary Linwood needlepaintings as well as other needlepaintings of the period. They also allowed me free access to other collected materials relating to Mary Linwood. I wish to thank Robert Ryland, Senior Librarian, and Rachel I. Claire at the Birmingham Archives and Heritage Services, which houses the Matthew Boulton Archives. Here I held and read wonderful correspondences exchanged between Matthew Bolton and Mary Linwood, and with his children. At the Victoria and Albert Museum I have several people to thank, but in particular, I want to mention Kate Hay (now curator) and Louisa Collins, Assistant Curator of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department, who provided me with access to some of the embroideries in storage at the museum and off site, and Moira Thunder, Curator of Word & Image Department, who took a keen interest in my research. Thanks go to the helpful staff at the National Art Library where I spent many days.

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For reading and commenting on my chapters, and for working with me on the editing of my writing, and for all of the lively conversations, thanks go to my good friend Marc James Léger. Lastly, thanks to my friends, colleagues and family for sharing and supporting this endeavour with me.

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PREFACE

My work in the Humanities Doctoral Program in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture at Concordia University is spread across three disciplines: studio arts, art history, and craft history. My overall PhD thesis project is comprised of three elements. The first consists of new visual works. These add to my needlegraph series; that is to say, pieces made using anonymously produced, twentieth-century needlepoints of canonical paintings, combined with monochoromes that detail the errors and inconsistencies of the latter. The second is a presentation of artefacts that relate to the period of study of the written thesis: Berlin wool works, Berlin charts, needlepaintings, and various other images, publications and source materials. The third element is the written thesis text, which is a genealogical study of Berlin work. The presentation of the visual artworks and artefacts is achieved through the display of the contents of what I refer to as a micro-archive. The exchange between my historical research and my visual work is multiply articulated in the content and structure of my written dissertation and in the micro-archive.

The micro-archive is presented to my examining committee as part of my thesis. It consists of those elements mentioned above and which are detailed in the appendix that concludes this document. The micro-archive consists of the new artworks as well as the material artefacts that have aided in the development of my understanding of Berlin work. This preface is therefore witness to the mutual interdependence between my studio work and my historical and theoretical research.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is engaged with the critical history of pictorial needlepoint embroidery as a popular art form. It explores historical issues around technology, creativity and the social functions of art. Simultaneously, this dissertation is concerned with the methodological grounding of my art practice. The project is therefore interdisciplinary in nature, and moreover, as a project undertaken with a view to both historical exploration and contemporary cultural practice, it is conceived in Foucauldian terms as genealogical. Its different elements operate between embroidery and painting, between contemporary art and cultural history, and between material objects and written texts. The research that is therefore presented in this thesis should be understood as an intrinsic aspect of my artwork. To say that this project is a genealogy is to locate the actuality of my art practice as both the grounding and the *raison d'être* of my research.

My art practice makes use of needlepoint in order to question the production of social value and cultural meaning through art discourse. Needlepoints that are based on well-known canonical paintings, which I first encountered through family collections, raise questions concerning gendered practices, issues of originality, and reproduction in art. I began working with needlepoint in 1994 and soon became interested in the history of the medium, its association with women's domestic practices, and the relation of the latter to both the art historical canon and the concerns of contemporary art. In the course of my research on the history of the precursor of needlepoint, that is, Berlin work, I was surprised to discover that histories of embroidery either glossed over its practice or qualified it as a low point in embroidery history. I was well aware not only that the history of art had marginalized embroidery practices but that some feminist art practices

since the 1970s had been engaged in challenging the art canon by reclaiming embroidery as part of a political project of emancipation. Working with and on the history of the production of needlepoint seemed to me to offer a means to complicate the simple reversal or so-called "deconstruction" of hierarchies that is often associated with postmodernism. Thus, my goal was not merely to question the way that modernism had created distinctions between avant-garde and kitsch, between women's practices and those of men, but to consider how my own practice might challenge the predominant structures of the art system. I had done this in part through my decision to work with needlepoint in such a way as to question the quest for the new through the recuperation of outmoded forms. Since then, and through this project of doctoral research-creation, I have transformed my work by undertaking a detailed genealogy of Berlin work.

This thesis has therefore been a means to develop my art practice and its concerns. The research that I have undertaken presents new ways to engage with needlepoint practices. For this I have focused specifically on eighteenth-century needlepainting and nineteenth-century Berlin work, the precursors of needlepoint as it is commonly known. The history of these practices, very specifically, in the context of their development in Great Britain, complicates any simple dichotomy between art and craft, painting and embroidery, between originality and imitation, and between industrial mechanization and romantic creativity.[1] These practices are part of the development of enlightenment ideals

[1] Although I do not discuss the matter in this thesis, the English context is different from the rest of Europe insofar as the history of the Reformation and iconoclasm created the conditions for a particular engagement with visual practices. While Berlin work was practiced throughout Europe, my reading of it here is very specific to its emergence during the industrial revolution in England. The political alliances between England and Germany during this period are a likely factor in the embrace of Berlin work in Great Britain.

concerning both art and industry. Knowing about them offers alternatives to our understanding of the histories of both embroidery and modern art. Needlepainting was a practice based in the skillful copying of paintings in thread, including their painterly effects. Berlin work, its descendant, introduced a grid chart that aided in the copying of a model image, frequently a painting. The chart translated an image onto a grid form that could be reproduced one stitch at a time onto a grid canvas. In contrast to needlepainting, Berlin work required less skill and yet, as this thesis will demonstrate, represented a dissemination of the virtues and effects of needlepainting. In this thesis and in my artwork I explore Berlin work as the systematization of needlepainting, as the means by which industrial practices were introduced into domestic embroidery.

My research and practice look at Berlin work as a new technology, one that ensured the successful reproduction of an image. Ann Bermingham has shown that nineteenth-century amateur practices in England developed out of the commodification of fine art and became identified with both the deskilling and commercialization of art practices. Amateur practices also became associated especially with middle-class women.[2] I propose that Berlin work's relationship to needlepainting falls within this development. I examine in detail the practice of the best-known producer of needlepainting, Mary Linwood, and present her work as the model that was emulated by those making Berlin work. While Berlin work can be associated with a multitude of products and publications aimed at assisting and teaching amateur artists, it is distinctly interesting because it

[2] Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). See in particular Chapter 4: "'Articles Fanciful, Useful, and Neat' – The Art Business of Amateur Art," 127-181.

mechanizes and automates the activity of the embroiderer. My project therefore locates Berlin work within a history of the automation of image making.

When I first began to work with needlepoint, I was particularly interested in its relation to art discourse. After some initial research on its history, I discovered that Berlin work was long ago determined to be unworthy of mention as a legitimate form of embroidery, since it confused embroidery with painting.[3] In fact, numerous authors, writing at different times, present widely diverging views on the value and meaning of Berlin work. This realization allowed me to consider that feelings and ideas that we might assume belong to us in the present actually have not only a prehistory, but also, an association to a highly indefinite series of accidents, reversals, discontinuities, and differences. Foucault's idea of genealogy, understood very specifically in terms of a "history of errors," provides me with a way to contextualize such varied value judgements. Many embroidery histories, as we will see, perpetuate myths about Berlin work that have more to do with its present status than with its historical becoming. My current approach to Berlin work, understood in terms of genealogy, implies that the truth of needlepoint is not grounded in the past any more than it is in the present and that in each case what we have to contend with are discursive regimes that create truths about culture. However, for this project, if one wants to understand the operation of truth in both the past and the present, it is necessary to understand the *specific characteristics of Berlin work* at its moment of emergence. Needlepoint, very specifically, is the means that I have chosen to make work that incorporates a reflexive critique of the disciplinary regimes within which I operate as a contemporary artist.

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[3] See A.F. Kendrick, *English Embroidery* (London: B.T. Batsford, [1905] 1913).

Genealogy and the Birth of Needlepoint

Berlin work introduced an industrial-age type of efficiency into bourgeois domestic embroidery. Through a rationalized division of labour, Berlin work democratized access to needlework. It also offered a means to participate in the world of fine art to those who could afford the charts and the time required to copy them. As a practice that promoted and embodied an industrial aesthetic, Berlin work bypassed the requirement of artistic skill, a fact that would later contribute to its marginalization. Much of my work, both in terms of artistic creation and in terms of the present research, has been concerned with the fact that needlepoint today, and for at least the last one hundred years, has existed as a form of *subjugated knowledge*. It is a fact, however, that Berlin work was at one time one the most respected cultural activities practiced by European women. We could say, then, that it has existed, at different times, as both official and subjugated forms of production. To work with the medium of needlepoint has therefore been a way for me to make artwork that directly addresses the construction of cultural value. In fact, my reasons for choosing to work with needlepoint have been motivated by this concern with the historical and social construction of cultural meaning and cultural value.

I borrow the idea of subjugated knowledge from the writings of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. This concept is associated with his method of effective history, which is the term that Foucault uses to explain his approach to the Neitzschean view of history, itself understood in terms of genealogy. Simply stated, genealogy for Foucault is a way to make subjugated histories re-emerge in the present. Before I explain the significance of the concept of subjugated knowledge for my work, it is therefore necessary to first say

a few words about genealogy.[4] Genealogy provides a highly productive way for me to look at the history of Berlin work, especially as I relate it to my concerns as a contemporary artist who makes use of needlepoint, a technique that has been relegated to the margins of cultural production. Foucault's theory of genealogy allows me to break with the kind of embroidery history that would seek to establish needlepainting and Berlin work within a canonical history of fine art. What interests me, rather, is the possibility of examining the systems of power and knowledge, the techniques of control – such as hierarchization, observation, measurement and normalizing judgement – that have worked to create truths about needlepoint and about modern art. With Foucault, the objects of study are typically written materials, documents that are understood in their institutional contexts and that link knowledge to power. In this project, I also work with historical texts as a means of understanding the emergence of Berlin work; however, as witnessed by the micro-archive that accompanies this project, I have also worked with historical artefacts and my own artwork as means to enrich my research.

In undertaking a study of the development of needlepoint, there is the temptation to consider eighteenth-century needlepainting and nineteenth-century Berlin work in terms of a narrative of origins that represents the "truth" of its past. Foucault's genealogy was developed as a means to resist such a return to the innermost secret of the origin. In this, Foucault showed his debt to Friedrich Nietzsche, which is elaborated in his 1971 essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." In that essay Foucault refers to his use of the

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[4] The key texts in this discussion are Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139-64, and Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 17-46.

Nietzschean concept of genealogy in terms of "effective history," a method that challenges the rational operations of what we take to be truth, which for Foucault is based in histories of domination. Effective history rejects the notion of a smooth, progressive developmental history in favour of a method that abandons absolutes and allows us to grasp the conditions that make certain truths normative and acceptable at certain times. For Nietzsche, genealogy does not allow the historian to trace a "pedigree," nor does it allow the historian the vantage point of seeing time as it unfolded; rather, it positions the viewer in the present, looking "up" the lines of transmission at the unlimited and ramifying series of ancestors. The further back a genealogy reaches, the less it is likely to find anything determinant of a known outcome. Genealogy as effective history does not offer unbroken lines of value-preserving succession but is characterized by contingency.[5] With Nietzsche, therefore, we cannot return to an origin in order to trace the source of value and to preserve or enhance that value. The value of truth, he asserted in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), is therefore inaccessible to any correspondence theory of history, but is rather a will-to-truth. The historian is therefore a constituent part of the historical narrative she is producing. The question he asks is how do certain truths come about. Those who seek truth in origins attempt to capture the exact essence of things, "that which is already there."[6] Instead of ideal essences, what the genealogist finds are alien forms, disparity, division and difference, rather than, citing Nietzsche, "a metaphysical extension which arises from the belief that things are most precious and

[5] Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche and Genealogy," in his *Morality, Culture and History: Essays on German Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.
[6] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 142.

essential at the moment of birth."[7] For Foucault, origins are not discrete but are discontinuous. For all this, the genealogist does not altogether abandon origin, but changes its sense since this transformative activity makes knowledge possible. Origins correspond not to the truth of history but to discourse as a politics of truth.

History for Nietzsche must not be pursued for its own sake, as an end in itself, but must be subjected to the demands of life. History should not sap the vitality of culture but should be life-enhancing. These thoughts are best expressed in Nietzsche's lengthy essay, "The Use and Abuse of History for Life" (1874).[8] In this text, Nietzsche criticizes what he refers to as monumental history, an approach that values the past over the present. While we need history and understanding of the past, a monumental or fixed representation of history, he believes, paralyzes the spirit of action and weakens civilization. The activity of the genealogist therefore appears immoral in her protest against the pretensions of historicism. Against unhistorical forgetfulness, Nietzsche proposes the capacity for "feeling unhistorically."[9] From the point of view of the present, it is the task of critical history to cast off the burden of traditional and venerable uses of the past and to judge monumental history, which looks to origins for reassurance as to the existing order of things.

Effective history, as Foucault understands it, is a history of errors. Here Foucault draws directly from Nietzsche's essay, which warns that the judgements of critical memory are dangerous inasmuch as we in the present are the inheritors of the errors, passions and crimes of previous generations. Nietzsche writes:

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[7] Nietzsche cited in Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 143.
[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History for Life* (Indianopolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957).
[9] Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 6.

> Though we condemn the errors and think we have escaped them, we cannot escape the fact that we spring from them. At best, it comes to a conflict between our innate, inherited nature and our knowledge, between a stern, new discipline and an ancient tradition; and we plant a new way of life, a new instinct, a second nature, that withers the first.[10]

Error is therefore the way that Nietzsche describes the constructive activity of the historian. Foucault retains from Nietzsche this general focus on error, providing the historian with new ways to articulate the relations between the past and the present and between different pasts. As part of this idea of error, Foucault gives epistemological priority to the overlooked. Genealogy records singularities and details and finds them in "the most unpromising of places," where we might not expect to find anything of value or interest.[11] Genealogy also looks for the reoccurrence of details and singularities in different places, a repetition that brings into play Nietzsche's sense of error. We find singularities in places where we might not expect them to be, within "indefinite teleologies" where they should not be. Genealogy therefore challenges the metaphysicist's pursuit of origins by drawing a distinction between origin and descent. As this thesis will demonstrate, the descent of Berlin work through time does not produce a unified object but instead reveals the operations of normalizing knowledge.

The concepts of descent and emergence are two of the means by which Foucault elaborates his genealogical method. Genealogy challenges the past as destiny. Instead of an unbroken continuity from an ideal point of origin, genealogy follows a course of *descent*, identifying errors, accidents, deviations, reversals, faults and fissures. Rather than an identity, history is a faulty calculation, an assemblage or a heterogeneity of fragments that do not constitute a distinct heritage. Related to this is the concept of

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[10] Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 21.
[11] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 139-40.

emergence as the place of mediation between forces. Approaching Nietzsche's idea of "eternal return," emergence is the moment of arising, the current episode in a series of subjugations. It is one of the terms that comes closest to Foucault's idea of threshold, the clearing of space that disperses time into a heterogeneity of events. Rather than a monolithic official history, emergence indicates the place where the interpretative action of the genealogist surreptitiously appropriates the past in a series of interpretations, reversals and substitutions. As a place of confrontation, emergence indicates the thresholds, the relations of domination that distance one historian from another, but that also creates the universe of rules that allows historians to share spirit or historical sense. Unlike the traditional historian, the genealogist acknowledges her grounding in time and place, her preferences in the controversy and the obstacles to her research.

As a genealogy of Berlin work, my practice challenges contemporary histories of embroidery that tend to ignore Berlin work or describe it simply as a deskilling of embroidery. Histories of needlepoint tend to focus on Berlin work very narrowly, leaving aside its relation to fine art, its place in the commercialization of elite amateur practices and its place in the development of a nineteenth-century division of labour. In contrast, genealogical research allows for an understanding of Berlin work as a complex practice with ties to legitimate art and that was based in an appreciation of the industrial systematization of embroidery. Some awareness of the history of needlepoint in terms of the development of nineteenth-century Berlin work allows us to determine that needlepoint has not always had a lowly kitsch status, but was once a privileged leisure practice among middle-class women. It is clear that this once culturally valorized practice had by the twentieth century become a subjugated knowledge.

In "Two Lectures," an essay written in two parts in 1976, Foucault elaborates his method of genealogy with the idea of subjugated knowledge, a concept that bridges popular and erudite knowledge. He writes: "Let us give the term genealogy to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today."[12] With the term subjugated knowledge Foucault means two things. He is referring to "historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization," and secondly, he believes we should understand something altogether different, that is, a set of knowledges that are "disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."[13] He believes that it is through the release of these low-ranking, specific knowledges that criticism performs its work. He concludes that it is through the union of buried erudite knowledge (knowledge that was once official and is now disguised by other knowledges) with the disqualified local knowledge (knowledge considered inadequate to constituting truths) that critical discourses discover their essential force.[14] Embroidery histories have to date failed to account for the *emergence* of Berlin work, which is partly to say that they ignore their own constructive activity. As one aspect of the manifold deviations of historical *descent*, embroidery histories have had to contend with their relative exclusion from the discourse of modern art, a fact that has, consequently, tended to emphasize formalist analyses of embroidery. Because of this specific form of exclusion and occlusion, it has become all

[12] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 22.
[13] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 20-1.
[14] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 21.

the more difficult in the present to write a history of Berlin work. A genealogy of Berlin work therefore begins with a discarded medium, a practice that is barely intelligible within today's cultural institutions.

In England, the practice of Berlin work was so widespread during most of the nineteenth century that it was often simply referred to as embroidery, as though no other form of embroidery existed.[15] In order to appreciate nineteenth-century Berlin work, it has been necessary for me to explore the forms of embroidery that predominated in the period before the advent of Berlin work, before the development of Berlin charts for canvas work, and before the rise of Berlin work as a modern amateur practice. With this, it becomes possible to appreciate its later decline, as the Royal School of Needlework instituted artistic embroidery practices that worked against the kind of deskilling and systematization embodied in Berlin work. A genealogy that traverses more than two centuries reveals the strange dichotomies, twists and reversals that link the needle arts with the more privileged world of painting. In later chapters, I examine how the cultural value of Mary Lindwood's needlepaintings was displaced by the professionalization of art practice. Linwood's legacy could not be preserved intact, however, as a discursive shift, brought about in part by the development and success of Berlin work, and aided by nineteenth-century notions of artistic genius, led to needlepainting being placed within an entirely new relation to its own past. In the context of the creation of the Royal School of Needlework in the 1870s, Linwood's works *could* be considered negligible because, since they borrowed their language from painting, they could not be considered works

[15] Geoffrey Warren, *A Stitch in Time: Victorian and Edwardian Needlecraft* (London: David and Charles, 1976), 33.

produced within their own realm. Here we have a case of what Foucault describes as the operations of discourse in its production of truth.

As a form of subjugated knowledge, it would be a mistake to ignore the ways in which Berlin work was contrasted to the work made by professional artists. Much of this history relates to the field of feminist art history, in particular, as it has had much to say about the subjugation of women's practices. Feminist studies have also examined the relegation of women's practices to the status of craft, a category that applies almost without hesitation to the practice of needlepoint. A genealogy of Berlin work must therefore consider certain assumptions about feminist art history.

Berlin Work and the Question of Domestic Craft

There are very good historical reasons to consider Berlin work in terms of medium and gender. In her landmark study, *The Subversive Stitch*, Rozsika Parker argues that, historically speaking, social institutions have assigned sewing to women and other kinds of activity, such as carpentry, to men. Moreover, the construction of femininity, often maintained by the family structure, once categorized women's activities as inferior, leading to a hierarchization of art and craft, with, for example, embroidery being considered natural to women.[16] Parker argues that this has not always been the case and so the question of embroidery is affected by who is making it, when and where. According to Parker and Pollock, in their essay "Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts," feminist historians have reacted to centuries of neglect by revalorizing work made by women. This celebratory attitude, they argue, leads to a loss of complexity:

[16] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1984), 5.

> By simply celebrating a separate heritage we risk losing sight of one of the most important aspects of the history of women and art, the intersection in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the development of an ideology of femininity, that is, a social definition of women and their role, with the emergence of a clearly defined separation of art and craft.[17]

As early as the seventeenth century, needlework was associated with femininity.[18] For this reason, we should not only consider the importance of craft for an understanding of Berlin work, but equally, and at the same time, the importance of a feminine stereotype. Parker and Pollock argue further that the site of cultural production, awarded different status for men and women, has informed the reception of feminine craft. They write:

> what distinguishes art from craft in the hierarchy is not so much different methods, practices and objects but also where things are made, often in the home, and for whom they are made, often for the family. The fine arts are a public, professional activity. What women make, which is usually defined as "craft," could in fact be defined as "domestic art." The conditions of production and audience for this kind of art are different from those of the art made in a studio and art school, for the market and gallery. It is out of these different conditions that the hierarchical division between art and craft has been constructed; it has nothing to do with the inherent qualities of the object nor the gender of the maker.[19]

Linwood's needlepaintings do not quite fit this narrative insofar as they were made to be shown publicly and were evaluated on an equal standing with painting as a liberal art. Berlin work, which emerged later, also demonstrated qualities that cause us to question the reductive aspects of the ideology of separate spheres. Berlin work cut across private and public worlds by bringing into domestic embroidery the virtues of manufacture and

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[17] Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, "Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts," in *Aesthetics: The Big Questions*, ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 46. See also Lisa Tickner's criticism of the temptation to celebrate women's practices as a complement to the history of art in Tickner, "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference," *Genders* 3 (Fall 1988): 96. It is clear that such a celebration of a separate heritage is no longer the case in contemporary craft histories.

[18] Parker and Pollock, "Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts," 48.

[19] Parker and Pollock, "Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts," 51-2.

liberal education. It also cut across class lines. In the eighteenth century, embroidery was still considered a genteel art, practiced by leisured women and taught in finishing schools for the girls of upper middle-class families.[20] Berlin work democratized needlepainting by giving vicarious access to skill and education through the intermediary of manufactured design charts.

In terms of research methodology, I wish to make it clear that my approach to needlepainting and Berlin work requires that these practices be understood in general terms as cultural production rather than more narrowly in terms of craft. I do not begin and end from the point of view of craft research, for which there is a rich contemporary discussion, and therefore I am not concerned to provide a presentation of changing definitions of craft.[21] Rather, I locate my project very specifically in relation to what exactly has been discursively produced in terms of knowledge that relates directly to needlepainting and Berlin work. Much of this material can be found within histories of embroidery and a few rare books dedicated to Berlin work. On this score, my research reflects the most up-to-date material that is available to the researcher.[22]

In order to understand Berlin work, we need to do more than think of it in terms of medium and gender. The development of modern art as a professional sphere played a major role in the displacement of needlepainting, an elite amateur practice, to that of Berlin work, a commercialized and deskilled version of the former, or, in terms that I will

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[20] See for example, Betty Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery: American Samplers and Pictorial Needlework, 1650-1850* (New York: Knopf, 1993).
[21] On this, see for example Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).
[22] In relation to this, I would consider that I am the only artist or researcher who has approached postwar needlepoint, understood most commonly as domestic craft, in terms of the history of its development as needlepainting and Berlin work.

define in the second chapter, as a "modern amateur" practice. The notion of amateurism has a complex history in the modern period. In the eighteenth century sense of the term, amateur referred to a skilled, elite leisure activity that was practiced by both men and women. An amateur practice could involve very diverse activities such as drawing, writing, collecting or the pursuit of a scientific discipline. The development of the Royal Academy in the eighteenth century was accompanied by the commodification of high art. By studying how fine art was commercialized and commodified, Ann Bermingham demonstrates that the interests of professional artists and entrepreneurs were linked.[23] The distinctions turned on issues of professionalism and gender as well as on a shared ideology of commercial capitalism. With the commercialization process, women increasingly became the practitioners of amateur art and as a result amateurism became practically synonymous with an emergent consumerism and with women at the same time. The skilled eighteenth-century amateur, who was proficient but did not depend on the sale of their work, was displaced in the nineteenth century by the professional – who produced for public exhibition and for sale – and by the new forms of commercialized amateur work. Here we have the split that associated Berlin work with the "modern" amateur: whereas the professional artist made original works of genius that displayed an individual style, the amateur's work was without genius or individuality and was thought of as derivative.[24] All the while, the bourgeois ideology of separate spheres masculinized professional high art as a public sphere of activity. By the 1850s, according to embroidery historian Lanto Synge, women were making "endless quantities of indifferent

[23] Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 127-8.
[24] Birmingham, *Learning to Draw*, 128.

work and inappropriate ornamentation" because of social pressures that required that women display certain abilities.[25] Berlin work, which was the most widely practiced form of embroidery in this period, existed as a commodified and gendered amateur activity.

As opposed to other kinds of nineteenth-century amateur practice, such as amateur painting, for example, Berlin work had the particular characteristic of eliminating risk and guaranteeing a quality product. It is difficult to appreciate this fact independently of the work ethic of the middle class, which tended to dislike risk in matters of social competition.[26] As with the manufacturing of commodities, Berlin work assured a good product in good time. Berlin work therefore possessed complex links to the rise of the European industrial class. As Geoffrey Warren argues, most "Victorians took pride in their ability to invent machines which, in a matter of hours, could turn out what had previously taken many months to make by hand."[27] Berlin work thus shared in the world-transforming process of industrialization. Alongside professional art activity, whether practiced by men or women, amateur practices became the preserve of leisured women who produced skilful works as home decorations and as objects of gift giving.[28] By the late nineteenth century, attempts were made to recuperate and define embroidery as a traditional skilled practice. Most notably, the virtues of the hand-made as a means to correct the poor design qualities of mass-produced products became a hallmark of the

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[25] Lanto Synge, *Art of Embroidery: History of Style and Technique* (Woodbridge: The Royal School of Needlework, Antique Collector's Club, 2001), 268.
[26] Francis Spufford and Jenny Uglow, eds., *Cultural Babbage: Technology, Time and Invention* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 18.
[27] Geoffrey Warren, *A Stitch in Time: Victorian and Edwardian Needlecraft* (London: David & Charles, 1976), 52.
[28] See Barbara Morris, *Victorian Embroidery* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962).

Arts and Crafts Movement. The Royal School of Needlework, which was associated with this movement, criticized Berlin work for contributing to the loss of traditional needlework skills. The attributes of Berlin work that were attractive to middle-class producers in the early century all but disappeared by the *fin de siècle*. Subsequently, twentieth century histories of embroidery have focused on design and technique but have ignored the many issues that are relevant to Berlin work which this genealogy has uncovered: the culture of the copy, the professionalization and commercialization of art, product innovation, the advent of the modern amateur, and the importance of an industrial aesthetic. For example, a typical handbook on embroidery from 1920 promotes the importance of design being derived from technique. It considers that embroidery designs should not copy paintings or drawings, and that stitch and materiality – in other words, medium specificity – are of prime consideration.[29] A genealogy brushes such secondary sources against the grain, turning them into primary sources that reveal a history of Berlin work that was hitherto nonexistent.

Embroidery, therefore, as specific to women, has a particular purchase on genealogy as a means of revisiting the history of Berlin work. I do not recover Berlin work as a domestic craft object, but rather, as a problematic that serves to question the operations of discourse in the production and reproduction of ideologies of art, class and gender. When placed in relation to feminist art history, the study of Berlin work produces a new object, one which, as Pollock puts it, is "able to grasp the interrelation between the dominant formations around sexuality and power which inform but are mystified by the outward

[29] Mrs Archibald Christie, *Samplers and Stitches: A Handbook of the Embroiderer's Art* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1920).

and visible signs of a discipline's or practice's particular habits and professional procedures."[30]

As an extension of my art practice, this study of Berlin work transforms needlepoint into a conjuncture of meanings and values that come to be understood transversally, across time and across competing sites of meaning and knowledge. From the perspective of this thesis, any attempt to present the history of Berlin work must in some measure address the cultural meanings and values that have been associated with this form of embroidery throughout its two-hundred year history. This genealogy of Berlin work, because it begins in the present, requires that its eventual transformation into a domestic craft be acknowledged. In other words, the question of the subjugation of Berlin work by the development of a series of new techniques is crucial to my research. This genealogy reveals nineteenth-century Berlin work to be an altogether different kind of practice from what is typically assumed by contemporary viewers and historians of needlepoint. I understand my own work in research-creation as a kind of neo-conceptual art practice that looks into the genesis of its own possibilities of emergence. In this way, it is less about the work's visual, "retinal" aspects, and more about an interdisciplinary research into the conditions of art as knowledge that is situated between disciplines.

Outline of the Project

In term of discourse, it should be evident that needlepoint as an object of study is determined in part by the kinds of knowledge that shape it. Needlepoint, in its various incarnations, circulates differently in different historical eras. My research method

[30] Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 27-8.

allows me to avoid the tendency to separate needlepainting and Berlin work from their historically specific contexts of production and from the intentions of their producers. When I started working with needlepoint, I approached it in the space in which I found it, which was that of a domestic hobby. Rather than avoid the discursive features of needlepoint, in other words, what was typically seeable and sayable about it, I decided to investigate the histories and systems of normalizing knowledge that had created its status as a common cultural practice. Working with the history of pictorial embroidery produces a kind of discourse-specificity and reflexivity within my art practice. In the first chapter I describe the interdisciplinary aspect of my thesis. While the methods of art historical study are germane to my research, the ultimate *raison d'être* of this research is for it to figure as an element of my art practice as it has evolved over time and over the course of at least two university graduate programs. The institutional site of research-creation is therefore not merely incidental to my work or a means to pursue a career; it is fundamental to my undertaking insofar as the concerns of my artwork led me directly to in-depth research on needlepainting and Berlin work, understood in terms of a genealogical history of errors.

The first chapter therefore establishes the terms of the research project as a feature of my artwork. As such, it is the motivating frame for the next four chapters. The essence of what this genealogy reveals is realized in the last chapter, which traces a historiography of Berlin work through published documents. These written sources, however, do not represent the emergence of Berlin work in the same ways and with the same concerns that I elaborate in chapters two to four. My own research and its specific concerns allows me to consider the constructive or discursive dimensions of these written

texts in terms of a series of issues that are otherwise absent. There is therefore in this structure a parallel between the methods of my research and the form of my artwork and its identification of "errors," understood very specifically in terms of effective history. Through the accumulation of details, we do not arrive in the fifth and final chapter to a unified image of Berlin work. What we achieve, rather, is the understanding of a far more dispersed object – more contingent in fact than its extant histories lead us to believe.

With this structure in mind, the second chapter delves into the production of needlepainting in Great Britain from the period 1750 to 1850. The most prominent needlepainter was Mary Linwood, an artist who has been all but forgotten in later centuries. The case of Linwood is significant especially insofar as the decline in the admiration of her work is a retroactive effect of the rise and success of Berlin work as well as the rise of certain notions of modern art. Linwood's copies of paintings made in embroidered wool challenged the standards of the Royal Academy yet were admired by RA members as well as by aristocratic patrons. In order to appreciate the trajectory of Linwood's work, this chapter looks into the social, political, economic and cultural context of eighteenth-century Great Britain. I examine needlepainting in relation to the entrepreneurial activities of the middle class and as part of the growth of new cultural institutions, new audiences for art and new forms of patronage. I also consider needlepainting as a gendered practice. In this respect, the enlightenment era is shown to have created new possibilities for the advancement of women, in particular as they became celebrated for their contributions to Britain's cultural superiority. The subsequent rise of bourgeois ideology, however, had uneven and contradictory results for

the emancipation of women artists. This is the case, especially, in the context of the increasing professionalization of the arts. With the rise of the Royal Academy and the drawing of distinctions between certain media and genres, the work of amateur women artists like Mary Linwood became synonymous with domestic decoration and luxury goods. Regardless, Linwood held her own public exhibitions, which competed with the Royal Academy in terms of attendance. The prominence of painting in the development of modern art in some ways secured the ill-fated destiny of Linwood's work. In order to appreciate how needlepainting could be valued in it own right, however, and therefore act as a model for Berlin work, this chapter leads to succeeding chapters on the status of the copy in eighteenth-century art and the role of mechanization in the production of an industrial aesthetic.

One cannot understand either needlepainting or Berlin work without considering the fact that these forms of embroidery were based on practices of copying. Chapter three looks at the subjects of imitation and innovation in late eighteenth-century Great Britain. Just as matters of culture and taste were being established and debated, the scientific revolution had by and large distinguished liberal arts from scientific knowledge and mechanical arts. This divide between art and science was confounded, however, by the pressures of expanding markets and economies, and the entrepreneurial enthusiasm of the middle class. In this chapter I consider needlepainting as a type of product innovation that is typical of English cultural development in the eighteenth century. I situate product innovation in relation to the appreciation of copies and copying within cultural discourse. This contextualizes the work of needlepainters as well as the values that inhered in Berlin work. Through an exploration of the status of the copy in the eighteenth century, this

chapter explains how it is that Linwood's imitations of well-known paintings in thread could be valued as highly skilled and learned innovations that represented not only professionalism but civilized sociability, knowledge and refinement. With regard to the placement of this chapter, what is significant for this study is the fact that it performs the double task of elucidating both needleplainting and Berlin work.

The fourth chapter, which also performs this dual task, examines the shift from the eighteenth century to that of the nineteenth in terms of the development of machines. The purpose of the chapter is to suggest that the popularity of Berlin work would be due not only to those aspects of needlepainting and copying that will have been elaborated in previous chapters, but to an "industrial aesthetic" that derives from enlightenment ideals of technical innovation as an indicator of economic expansion and social progress. The chapter describes the development of the textile loom, the automation of pattern making, and the use of punch card programming to make woven images in textile. It explains how inventive techniques like mechanical painting and guidebooks informed the production of new cultural products like Berlin work. In doing so, it provides a description of the shift from the eighteenth-century notion of the amateur to what I refer to as the "modern amateur." The creation of a modern amateur not only helps to explain the criticism of Berlin work that became predominant in the 1870s, but helps us to appreciate how new artists' tools had earlier brought aesthetics dangerously closer to science through mass commercialization. The different forms of work, from skilled handicraft to scientific automation, are thereby shown to have vied and mingled in the advent of Berlin work.

The final chapter examines the history of Berlin work through a systematic study of nineteenth and twentieth-century written texts on embroidery and needlework. By approaching the subject in this way, I provide an account of the changing meanings and values attributed to Berlin work over a period of two centuries. In terms of genealogical method, the goal of the chapter is to signal the way in which the themes of the previous chapters – needlepainting, copying, mechanization, automation – relate to Berlin work in varying and inconsistent ways across time. My purpose here is therefore not to chart the rise and decline of Berlin work, but to explore the discursive operations that worked to produce needlepoint as a submerged practice. One of my goals in this chapter is to demonstrate how it is that most textile histories have ignored the significant features that are able to account for the popularity of Berlin work in the early nineteenth century. My purpose is not simply to correct these accounts, but more importantly, to understand this history in terms of the discursive organization of knowledge in modern institutions.

This thesis proposes that the history of Berlin work be considered as part of the history of the automation of manual labour, which includes the history of the mechanization of image-making. The role of the grid chart used for Berlin work signals a departure from earlier forms of embroidery towards industrialization and manufacture, innovations that were regarded by practitioners, I will argue, as signs of progress, ingenuity and affluence. Through the intermediary of charts that rationalized and systematized embroidery, and that gave widespread access to the visual culture of needlepainting, Berlin work was a means for practitioners to emulate and modernize the work of eighteenth-century amateurs. When it first emerged, Berlin work was valued as an industrial age phenomenon. However, as the post-romantic nineteenth century gradually began to

question the virtues of industry, the place of Berlin work gradually shifted. Worry about its proliferation led to the founding in 1872 of The Royal School of Needlework, whose mission it was to raise standards and restore the prestige of embroidery. By the twentieth century, Berlin work no longer possessed the cultural status it did a century earlier. A.F. Kendrick concluded his history of English embroidery with the view that the early nineteenth century is not worth mentioning and that its products were largely tasteless.[31] While Kendrick's "obituary" was somewhat premature, as evidenced by a century of needlepoint hobbyists, it did signal a transformation of the meaning of Berlin work, which was no longer considered a modern cultural activity.

The task of my work and of this thesis is therefore to delve into the discursive boundaries of thought that work to legitimize an apparent continuity in the history and discourse of art. When working with needlepoint I have avoided the kind of postmodern appropriation of a "low" kitsch cultural form that reduces this medium and practice to a surface semiotics. At the same time I do not attempt to naively aggrandize my use of needlepoint by associating it with the illustrious past of needlepainting and Berlin work. In contrast with typical embroidery histories, I am not concerned with pedigree. In the following first chapter I provide an account of the development of my art practice and situate its emergence in the context of university art research. I also make a case for this thesis as a form of intermedial, interdisciplinary work. My study of Berlin work emerged out of the concerns of my art practice. The research that is presented here should therefore be thought of as intrinsic to my art practice rather than supplemental. My working with needlepoint and my inquiry into its cultural history and contemporary

[31] A.F. Kendrick, *English Embroidery* (London: B.T. Batsford, [1905] 1913), 106.

meanings should therefore be seen as integral to an evolving practice-led research and research-led practice.

CHAPTER 1: FOR AN ARTIST'S INTERDISCIPLINARITY

This chapter introduces and explores the locus of my art practice at the intersection of the personal, the social and the cultural. It discusses my educational trajectory, my influences and my methodology in order to contextualize the historical research that is presented here. It establishes some links between my previous artworks and the doctorate as a stage in the development of my practice. The historical research that figures in this thesis should be understood from the outset as a feature of my exploration of the potential of needlepoint to bring to light the systems of power and knowledge that shape contemporary art practice. That is to say, this is research that is directly related to and that emerges from the working methods and concerns that have been developed primarily in a visual art practice, and which allows that art practice to be effective at the level of the creation of new knowledge. My intention in doing doctoral work has therefore been to establish a critical history and theory of pictorial needlepoint embroidery as part of the interdisciplinary development of my art practice.

Art, Process, Methodology

The intellectual context of my dissertation relates directly to institutional changes in the field of art education. Just as art history has undergone significant transformations in terms of interdisciplinary visual and cultural studies, the doctorate in studio art is a relatively new phenomenon. Whereas in the postwar period the Master's in fine arts became the requirement for teaching at the college level, the PhD in fine arts is rapidly becoming the new standard. In Canada, students who include studio art in their doctoral level studies can be found in programs like the Humanities Doctoral Program and the Specialized Individual Program at Concordia University, or the "made to measure"

doctoral program at the Université Laval, the Studio PhD program offered at York University, and the *Doctorat en études et pratiques des arts* at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Though my doctoral project does not lead specifically to a studio degree, some of the discussion surrounding the doctorate in studio art helps to contextualize this interdisciplinary thesis.

What is an artist's approach to interdisciplinarity? My work is produced as a form of self-writing that proceeds from diverse elements; self-writing is an ongoing record, reflection and response to encounters with objects, ideas, and documents, and that is practiced as a method of construction that involves transhistorical, intermedial, and transcultural knowledges. David Tomas describes transcultural spaces as being "predicated on chance events, unforeseen and fleeting meetings ... originating from ... perceived divides that separate and distinguish peoples".[1] Transcultural spaces are zones that exist between cultures. The genealogy that is proposed here brings into play the cultural frames of reference of different historical eras. If, as Tomas suggests, an interdisciplinarity that is effectively practiced leads to "new ways of conceiving the world," then perhaps transcultural space is also a place that is opened up within the interstices of certain kinds of interdisciplinary practices.[2]

This thesis presents a critical history of the specific cultural practice that I use in my artwork. Within the thesis, historical research appears as a dimension of my practice. It is the result of an intermedial interfacing of art practice and historical research that simultaneously explores and develops that practice. As art practice, the historical

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[1] David Tomas, *Transcultural Space and Transcultural Beings* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 1.
[2] Michèle Thériault and David Tomas, *Duction* (Montreal: Éditions Carapace, 2001), 54.

research can be described in terms of what James Elkins refers to as the "confluence of making and studying, understanding and knowledge, practice-led research and research-led practice, writing and seeing."[3] The thesis thus becomes the trace of a moment of transition as studio practice moves deeper into the university education system. The mutual interaction of practice-led research and research-led practice frames the method of historical research. I would consider this approach to interdisciplinary doctoral work as comparable to what Timothy Emlyn Jones defines as an "aesthetics of method" rather than an "aesthetics of style."[4] Over the years, my own approach to such an aesthetics of method has developed in a way that is distinct from and sometimes in opposition to the broader culture of institutionalized art production. One aspect of this oppositionality is the decision to work with needlepoint, which is an intensely time-consuming medium. It has taken me many years to develop a critical methodology that allows people to think about and consider my use of needlepoint in terms other than an ersatz postmodern recuperation of a kitsch product.[5] At the same time, my historical research has endeavoured to allow Berlin work to be perceived as something more than evidence of women's subjugation.

Over the years my method has developed alongside the varied and manifold notions of what constitutes a "successful" cultural practice. My formal education in university

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[3] James Elkins, "On Beyond Research and New Knowledge," in *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*, ed. James Elkins (Washington, D.C.: New Academia, 2009), 130.
[4] Timothy Emlyn Jones, "Research Degrees in Art and Design," in *Artists with PhDs*, 82-83.
[5] See David Tomas, "Programming and Reprogramming Artworks: A Case of Painting and Practicing Conceptual and Media Art by Other Means," *Intermédialités* 13 (2009): 89-113; Marc James Léger, "An Interview with David Tomas Concerning His Recent Collaboration with Rosika Desnoyers, Part 1," *Etc* 93 (2011): 42-46.

programs has shaped me as a contemporary cultural practitioner who takes theory and research as some of the means through which to fashion my work. It was during my undergraduate studies that I began to explore the contrast between critical thinking and official knowledge. My studies provided me with intellectual "tools" with which to explore contradictions and question the mechanisms that produce value and truth, for thinking both within and against official structures. The field of university education is the site within which I have come to produce thesis work, practice-led research and research-led practice that is facilitated and encouraged by interdisciplinary research.

To help situate the method of this thesis, we could consider the three kinds of practice-led research that are described by Christopher Frayling, one of the founders of the studio art doctorate. The first of these is the classic PhD, a doctoral project that pursues research *on* art. The second example is doctoral research that pursues research *in* the arts, which he describes as research *through* art, and therefore the study of a practice or material component of that practice which is process-based, and where the goal is not to produce a work of art though this may be part of the process. This type of research is located within a "cognitive" artistic paradigm. The third type is research *for* art, aimed at producing a work of art or an artefact. It emerges from an "expressive" artistic paradigm and does not lead to a PhD.[6] While I have pursued historical research on a subject, it is my approach and my reasons for that research that characterize my doctoral work. This thesis can therefore best be understood in terms of the second example, as the study of a practice or material component of that practice which is process-based, where the goal is not to produce a work of art though this may be part of the process. Practice-led doctoral level

[6] Christopher Frayling cited in Hilde Van Gelder and Jan Baetens, "The Future of the Doctorate in the Arts," in *Artists with PhDs*, 103.

research is a new phenomenon that allows studio practice to be included as a field of research and allows for a non-written component to be part of the thesis work. All such programs recognize practice-led research but differ in terms of the amount of importance placed on the written vis-à-vis the non-written components of the thesis. Both of these options acknowledge the extent to which theory has transformed what we understand today as artworks.

Another way to look at this is to consider Victor Burgin's outline of three types of doctoral candidates in the new studio degree: the first type is an accomplished visual artist who wants to and is able to write a long dissertation, the second is a researcher interested in producing a written text who is in need of contact with an environment of art production for practical experience, and the third type is a student who makes art and reads enthusiastically, who is interested in ideas but is unable or uninterested in writing a long dissertation, and rather turns concepts encountered into visual projects.[7] None of these three models adequately describe my method of work, however. The research involved in my thesis is oriented towards an integration of theory with practice. My interest in the history of domestically produced pictorial embroidery, as it was practiced in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, is concerned directly with thinking through how it is that visual art is practiced today. My project develops its own field of research around a specific object of historical investigation and defines the question of research method from the point of view of an art practice. The question then is not only the relationship of my practice to those methodologies that have come to

[7] Victor Burgin, "Thoughts on 'Research' Degrees in Visual Arts Departments," in *Artists with PhDs*, 74.

influence the humanities – namely, cultural studies, visual studies, the new historicism, and post-structuralism – but a related question, which is: how do knowledges developed in the field of studio arts come to inform those areas that are otherwise grouped under the heading of interdisciplinary visual culture studies?

In the collaborative project *Duction*, which is, among other things, an exhibition in the form of a book, the curator Michèle Thériault states that today there is an impetus to transform interdisciplinarity into a discipline, and that this happens despite the fact that interdisciplinary work and practice are, by definition, always outside a discipline, "located in crisscrossing elsewheres that can never be clearly defined," where the "object that emerges is new, strange and recondite."[8] Her collaborator, David Tomas, proposes that interdisciplinary work's *creative potential* is located in the knowledge that it articulates through an existence outside of disciplinary boundaries. He also suggests that interdisciplinarity is "condemned to a perpetual wandering, a constant target of various kinds of corrective disciplinary measures," and is effectively practiced by following trails and consequences "in search of new ways of conceiving the world."[9] Within an interdisciplinary program the question of disciplinary evaluation arises. Debates about the requirements and evaluation of the practice-led doctorate leading to a studio PhD are ongoing. The Humanities PhD Program that I am undertaking at Concordia University defines itself as open to alternative forms of research and increasingly defines its role as supporting artists' research. My interest is pursuing a PhD has been concerned with this possibility of allowing the means of art to be part of developing the paradigms and methods of art research.

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[8] Thériault and Tomas, *Duction*, 107.
[9] Thériault and Tomas, *Duction*, 54.

Defining a Practice: Needlepoint and the Identification of Errors

Those works and ideas that have influenced my art practice are multiple. While it is impossible to retrace all of these, it is possible to emphasize the main context through which most of these were acquired and interpreted: the university system. This next section locates my work at the crux of both university training and in the context of my personal, family history. While academia normally requires that one exit the narrow confines of one's personal history and background, it is a characteristic of my artwork that I have not done that, but instead, through the influence of feminist methodology, have drawn directly on family history as a source of knowledge and experience.

My siblings and I are the first in my extended family to attend university almost as a matter of course. We were encouraged by the example of my mother who was a school principal and who herself studied part-time while working and raising a family. Like many of my generation I have benefited from progressive social policies that in the postwar years encouraged the extension of higher learning to broad swathes of the Canadian population. In the late 1980s I undertook a bachelor's degree in visual arts at the University of Ottawa. This was a program that required students to take courses in studio art as well as art history and art theory. At the senior level, studio instructors did not give direct instruction but rather oversaw our experimentations through discussion and criticism. One of the most important courses I took while an undergraduate was an "Independent Studio" course that was based in the intersection of theory and practice. For this course I produced my first "textile" work, a large, three by two metre work made by weaving raw wool with vegetable twine strung between two wooden boards that were suspended by two painting easels. Whatever the merits of this work, it allowed me to

explore many of the ideas I was encountering in my readings, in particular, notions having to do with the qualifiers of art, especially those that are concerned with establishing value through the consecration of museums and through conservation practices. The work was entered in the graduate exhibition in 1992. It was praised by one member of the jury as mature work and was considered reminiscent of 1970s feminist art by another. This came as no surprise to me as I was also influenced by readings in women's studies. After this initial project, I later began to explore textiles more seriously through the medium of embroidery. My work drew inspiration from artists like Colette Whiten and Barbara Todd who had been using textiles as contemporary art materials.

In the context of a general art education, my textile work existed alongside many other streams, from my own systems-based process paintings to courses and lectures on avant-garde cinema, hermeneutics, structuralism, post-structuralism, post-colonial studies, feminist theory, critical theory and cultural studies. I learned through my own artwork and research how ideas do not merely reflect but shape the material world. After my senior year I began to think more critically about the links between textiles and feminism and became acutely aware of both the pleasures and pitfalls of revisiting strategies that had been experimented with in the past. At that time I was particularly interested in women's reproductive rights and reproductive technologies like in-vitro fertilization, gene mapping and cloning. I drew on these subjects as source material for explorations on the construction of identity and the production of social meaning through medical and scientific discourse. My research on scientific discourse informed my understanding of the quest for the perfecting of the human genome and for the elimination of “errors,” which of course has its dark side in terms of the history of eugenics, criminology, and IQ testing. In the 1980s and 90s, scientific research presented the possibility of creating and

designing human life. This research was mostly celebrated in the mainstream media. While social and ethical questions were raised, many doctors and scientists working in genetics and gene therapy championed their research as keys to the elimination of disease. A quick glance at my library at this time would take note of countless magazine and newspaper articles as well as such books such as Mary Jacobus et al's *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (1990), Judy Wajcman's *Feminism Confronts Technology* (1991), Patricia Hynes' *Reconstructing Babylon: Essays on Women and Technology* (1991), Ursula Franklin's *The Real World of Technology* (1992), Gwynne Basen et al's *Misconceptions: The Social Construction of Choice and the New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies* (1993), Donna Bassin et al's *Representations of Motherhood* (1994), and lastly, *Proceed With Care*, the 1993 Canadian Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. The ethical questions surrounding gene therapy troubled me immensely. Biotechnology represented the kind of privately funded research through which market forces come to lay bare the reproduction of human and natural life. As products for sale, biotechnologies would seek to accommodate a social structure that is premised on such notions as the survival of the fittest and a discourse of individual responsibility that conforms to liberal capitalist ideals. Advances in computing allowed the mapping of the human genome to be completed much sooner than predicted. What researchers discovered however is that it was far more complex than a linear set of instructions for building life.

The social issues that derive from this scientific research led me to the history of midwifery. In Canada, in the 1990s, midwifery began to be formalized through university instruction and I had at one time considered entering the field. Genetic mapping and midwifery, each of them concerned with different kinds of reproduction,

were key to the conceptualization of my first major textile project, titled *Material Constructions* (1994). This work includes three blue medical gowns with identical embroidered ultrasound and helix designs. The theme of reproduction was extended to the material means of my first needlepoint project, which is a large image of Mary Cassatt's 1893 print called *Gathering Fruit*. Cassatt's image has as its theme the interaction between three generations of women. My work repeats Cassatt's image five times and ties this theme to questions of biological, mechanical and cultural reproduction. For each section of the work I translated the Cassatt print into a relatively non-illusionistic needlepoint pattern and repeated the pattern horizontally. The notion of repetition alludes to various aspects of needlepoint practice: the mechanical reproducibility of canvases, the copying of source imagery and the repetitive nature of stitching. Unlike the embroidery that I used on the medical gowns, needlepoint allowed for a more exact, more "mechanical," form of copying that mimics Cassatt's choice to work with printmaking techniques.

1.1 Rosika Desnoyers, *After Mary Cassatt, Gathering Fruit (1893)*, 1994-1996. Needlepoint, cotton on canvas, 62 x 203 cm.

In order to say more about my choice to work with needlepoint embroidery, it is necessary for me to say something about my family history. I did not choose to work

with needlepoint as a way to continue a family tradition, but because needlepoint was a means to repeat an image through embroidery. Nevertheless, I did become aware of needlepoint through this family tradition. Needlepoint was practiced in my family in the 1970s and 80s. Even as a child I understood that needlepoint was practiced as a hobby, an amateur practice that is not unlike paint-by-number. One of my childhood memories involved trying to decide which was my favourite among my great-grandmother's large embroidered needlework canvases. Each was a copy of a canonical "master" painting: Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, and Boucher's *Leda and the Swan*. My great-grandmother was a skilled embroiderer who worked for many years as a self-employed dressmaker. She took up needlepoint later in life, after the rise of *prêt-à-porter* left her with fewer clients and after her eyesight had begun to fail her somewhat. During the 1970s needlepoint experienced a revival of sorts and she stitched several canvases, including the three works mentioned. At my great-grandmother's house, different opinions were exchanged about these needlepoint canvases. Textiles were always appreciated on the Hungarian side of my family but I was always also aware that they were the object of some ridicule. I started working with textiles as a way to explore and to question hierarchies of cultural value insofar as the latter informed this family experience.

Among some of the other issues involved in this personal narrative is the history of immigration. My great-grandparents emigrated to Canada from Hungary. My great-grandmother brought with her three young children and little else besides her sewing skills. After decades of hard work, her needlepoint "paintings" were meant to function, alongside other furnishings, as signs of economic and cultural achievement. Her choice of subject matter could also be explained in relation to her having visited the Sistine

Chapel. After also having seen *The Birth of Venus* "with her own eyes," she employed an artist to reproduce the painting onto needlepoint canvas. The artist was given a small poster of the work that my great-grandmother had purchased in Europe. My feeling is that she sought with this to impress her Hungarian friends in Toronto by displaying symbols of European high art as signs of cultural sophistication.[10] Within this family context, the needlepoints were valued as hand-crafted objects that were more than mere copies of famous paintings and that could be considered artworks in their own right. If they remained reproductions nonetheless, they were reproductions that were invested with a distinct aura. My great-grandmother's use of needlepoint allowed her to maintain a practice of embroidery as she moved from being a skilled seamstress to that of a retired hobbyist. Her activity points to a complex relationship between notions of creativity expressed in painting and the reproduction of the aura of painting through a process that is less mechanical and more manual than photography.

I first wrote about the influence of my great-grandmother's needlepoints while pursuing a Master of Arts program at the Université du Québec à Montréal. There I undertook a program of study through which I could develop those ideas and theories that were best able to make sense of a complex history and at the same time serve as a theoretical basis for new work. As part of my MA, I began to further theorize my practice and in particular, my needlegraph projects. These works incorporate needlepoints made by people other than myself. To produce a needlegraph project I typically purchase a needlepoint that is based on and reproduces the imagery of a canonical painting – a common theme in needlepoint production and one with a complex

[10] In terms of work that investigates the inter-generational tensions within East European immigrant communities in Canada, I should say that I drew a great deal of inspiration at this time from the early paintings of Natalka Hussar.

set of precedents. I present this first piece alongside a supplementary interpretive needlepoint that I produce myself. The appropriated needlepoints have for the most part been purchased through electronic auction on the Internet. When I receive a needlepoint I note its condition and proceed to its "mapping." I examine each stitch individually and document the "errors," which I define as *any stitch that does not sustain the uniformity of the stitching*. I note the position of each error and why it has been identified. For example, an error could be a missed stitch, a stitch sewn in the wrong direction, a stitch that is not completely formed, a stitch that covers the place of two stitches, a smaller stitch, or even a moth hole. Using the collected information, I then map out an interpretive chart that guides the stitching of the second, matching piece. The second needlepoint is like the first in the number of stitches and canvas point size but is stitched using only one colour and leaves a space, or skips a stitch, where an error was noted in the first needlepoint. The two needlepoints are then presented together. They are co-dependent in the creation and significance of the finished piece.

While there are possible correspondences in the needlegraph series to my previous interest in gene mapping and the maniacal quest to create the "perfect human," I am more concerned in this case with what my research has revealed to me, which is the fact that around the late nineteenth century, Berlin work, the precursor of needlepoint, had begun to be thought of as an erroneous or a mistaken practice in its entirety.[11] The needlegraphs

[11] There is a small incident that informed the making of the needlegraph series. On the occasion of a visit to my home, an acquaintance compared the five Cassatt images in *After Mary Cassatt, Gathering Fruit (1893)* and pointed out the minor discrepancies, as if playing a "find the mistakes" game. For several reasons, the experience was an uncanny one since I had used needlepoint because it offers a means to make of exact copies. My effort to reframe the uses of needlepoint and to heighten its mechanical features seemed to have been thwarted, that is, until I developed a new means to make its industrial qualities more obvious.

therefore represent the possibility of combining a number of interrelated concerns: the relation of embroidery – often associated with women's cultural practices – to that of official media like drawing, painting, and sculpture; the relation of high art to popular culture; the shifting space of feminist art and the resurgence of craft; and lastly, the possibility of integrating needlepoint into a critical contemporary art practice.

1.2 Rosika Desnoyers, *After Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Compotier (1879-1882)*, 2005-2006. Needlepoint, cotton on canvas, 40.4 x 51 and 39.3 x 50.8 cm.

There are different ways that the errors can be thought about but in essence the mapping that I do is meant to underscore the aspect of *systematization* that is inherent in the historical development of needlepoint. In historical terms, systematization does not always mean the same thing. On the one hand, for nineteenth-century Berlin work, which was forward looking, systematization was a way of democratizing access to embroidery and to liberal culture. The skilled manual work that went into needlepainting was replaced and mechanized through the intermediary of the Berlin work chart. On the other hand, for twentieth-century needlepoint, which is backward looking, but which does not "see" this history, the systematization is underemphasized and what is privileged instead

is the hand-made quality of the work. The identification of errors and surface discrepancies therefore has a meta function and serves to explore the introduction of Berlin work as a means to bring industrial efficiency into embroidery. We can therefore assume a telescoping of this meta function: insofar as needlepoint has been considered a misguided art within the history of embroidery, so is embroidery underprivileged within the history of art, and so too is cultural activity itself often thought of as inconsistent with broader social, economic and political priorities. It should also be said that the way that I conceive the errors in my needlegraph projects has itself changed over time. Working with errors is a way for me to visualize a genealogical reflection not only on the contemporary status of needlepoint but how this status came into being. In this sense, the errors that I identify in the needlegraph projects are more than incidental; they are a way for me to give critical attention to needlepoint as an overlooked, discarded practice. As we have seen, the purpose of geneaology as effective history is not to propose a reassuring recovery of the past in terms of a monolithic official history, but to understand the past as a place of confrontation, where interpretive action produces discontinuity and substitutions, where subjugated knowledges are brought into to play with official discourses as a way to recognize history as a history of domination. I study the past, therefore, with a view to identifying the accidents and differences that exist in history as a "history of errors." If it is possible that the viewer and even the maker of postwar needlepoint is unable to "see" the discursive parameters within which Berlin work operated and therefore out of which needlepoint emerged, it is equally and for many of the same reasons, possible that the same viewer, including contemporary art audiences, will not "see" what is materialized in my needlegraph and related works. One can therefore understand this thesis as a new means through which my work unfolds. While

the thesis is not meant to limit what it is that people will see in my work, it does seek to make visible the operations of power and knowledge that have constituted a specific cultural practice.

1.3 Rosika Desnoyers, *After Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Girls Selling Fruit (c.1670-1675)*, 2004. Needlepoint, wool on canvas, 70.7 x 55.6 and 69.7 x 56.4 cm.

The crux of my method as an artist, then, and the potential for a further development of my work, has been to do more research on the history of needlepoint. In this way, I have not sought to render needlepoint by presenting it in a new context, but paradoxically, by attempting to recover many of its originary qualities, meanings and effects. From here it is possible to write not only a history of Berlin work, but to produce myself and my work by understanding that undertaking as practice-led research. The following genealogy of Berlin work, a project undertaken as interdisciplinary practice, does not present itself and its objects in historicist terms. As genealogy, this thesis is understood as simultaneously

research in the history of Berlin work, the reasons for its appearance and occlusion, and, as a reflexive investigation on the possibilities of research-creation for the production of contemporary art. There is therefore much more at stake in this for me than presenting the world with an art history of Berlin work. It is a challenge that I present to the reader to think of the following chapters as simultaneously, and genealogically understood, practice-based research and research-based practice.

In the following chapter I focus on the particular case of Mary Linwood and her practice of needlepainting. Needlepainting could be said to be the direct precursor of Berlin work. In the terms presented above, the point here will not be to simply establish the pedigree of Berlin work, but rather to examine the conflicting forces and discourses that conditioned its emergence.

CHAPTER 2: NEEDLEPAINTING IN GREAT BRITAIN

If we consider that Berlin work is a means of representing images through the use of embroidery and also that these images are often well-known paintings, it becomes evident that the main source of inspiration for Berlin work was the eighteenth-century practice of copying paintings in silk or wool, known as needlepainting. This new form of embroidered picture emerged during the second half of the eighteenth century. Within embroidery practices there existed other examples of pictorial embroidery inspired by various kinds of written texts – literary, biblical and mythological. Needlepaintings differed from these in that they represented not only the subject matter but reproduced the appearance of the source. Needlepaintings are embroidered pictures in which a combination of long and short stitching in coloured thread is used to imitate painting. Needlepaintings reproduced the appearance of brush strokes. They were framed and hung as paintings. Although needlepaintings were given a great deal of press at the time, they were nevertheless quite rare and only a few practitioners were well-known. Most prominent among these were the English artists Anne Eliza Morritt (1726-1797), Mary Knowles (1733-1807) and Mary Linwood (1755-1845).

My task in this chapter is to demonstrate that during the eighteenth-century in Great Britain, needlepainting was considered a fine art and its value as an elite amateur practice was equal to other forms of visual art production such as painting. In the eighteenth century, the word amateur refers to someone who is a lover of the arts and who does not rely on the sale of their art as a source of income. The pejorative of sense of amateur,

understood in terms of "unprofessional" activity, only arises in the nineteenth century.[1] An eighteenth-century amateur was likely to be as or more studied than a professional, which was seen as an occupational category, referring to the "mercenary" work of a labourer rather than the "free" activity of the wealthy. The classification of needlepainting as an elite amateur practice, however, is complicated by the fact that it emerged at the same time as the professionalization of art. In eighteenth-century Great Britain, a new system of art developed, with new art institutions, new audiences for art and new concepts of taste. According to John Brewer, the modern idea of high culture is an eighteenth-century invention that was brought about by transformations introduced during the scientific revolution and shaped by the deliberate efforts of artists to define aesthetic criteria and standards of good taste.[2] To grasp the status and meaning of needlepainting during this time, a task which this thesis is the first to undertake, I examine its contexts of production, both intellectual and institutional, its sites of reception, transformations to notions of culture, new institutional forces and constraints, and the influence of gender ideology on women artists. In the second half of the chapter, this discussion leads to a focus on the needlepaintings of Mary Linwood, works that were highly regarded in her time and that competed with the standards established by her contemporaries in the Royal Academy. What is important to appreciate here is that needlepainting, like Berlin work, is not approached as a transhistorical phenomenon, but rather a site of shifting meanings and values, subject to social and cultural transformations. My argument, ultimately, is that needlepainting is the source of

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[1] Kim Sloan, *'A Noble Art': Amateur Artists and Drawing Masters c.1600-1800* (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 7.
[2] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), xvi.

inspiration for nineteenth-century Berlin work and that the earlier practice embodies many of the contradictions that would lead not only to the valorization of Berlin work but also its eventual devalorization by modernist aesthetics. By the end of the nineteenth century, needlepainting became anathema to modernist ideals because it was an impure form of intermedial practice, a hybrid of embroidery and painting. Paradoxically, it is the same "monstrous" qualities, its means of allowing the emboiderer to copy an image, that carried the interest in Berlin work well into the twentieth century in the form of needlepoint, a gendered practice associated with tedious repetition and domesticity.[3] While it may be that the culture of separate spheres allowed Berlin work to survive to the present day, albeit in altered form, we find that in the eighteenth century such qualifications had yet to be established and were, rather, open to debate as notions of art as a skilled activity and as the object of sense perception competed with emergent ideals of art as the expression of a free imagination.

Women Artists and Art Institutions in Eighteenth-Century England

The cultural contributions of women in eighteenth-century England were dramatically shaped by the rise of the bourgeois class and its economic principles of industrial and mercantile capitalism. The three prominent needlepainters of this era, Morritt, Knowles and Linwood, had diverse backgrounds, but all of them were very much informed by this context where entrepreneurial activity was closely associated with liberal enlightenment ideas of wealth production as a symbol of political freedom. While women's

[3] An anonymous author, writing in *The Times* newspaper, August 20, 1919, referred to the work of Linwood and others as "freak pictures." See Shirley Aucott, *Women of Courage, Vision and Talent: Lives in Leicester 1780 to 1925* (Leicester: Leicester County Council, 2008), 145.

contributions to art and literature were celebrated patriotically and taken as a measure of Britain's civilizational superiority, their access to culture was greatly conditioned by bourgeois ideologies of femininity and domesticity. The pseudo-scientific theories of this age of reason associated women with specific qualities, such as liveliness, fastidiousness, discernment and enthusiasm.[4] According to Garry Kelly, the particular qualities that were falsely associated with upper and middle-class women – delicacy of constitution, aesthetic perception, moral sensibility – were used to rationalize the disqualification of women from public life.[5] Kelly describes the bourgeois cultural revolution as refashioning earlier family forms, emphasizing conjugal and parental relations, and leading to a domestication of the arts, manifested in the encouragement of parlour music, drawing and water-colour, reading, gardening and needlework.[6] Bourgeois social relations worked to restrain the spheres of women's creative endeavour. Thus, for example, it was widely believed that women did not have the capacity of abstract thought that was required for the genre of history painting, but were instead more suited to the detailed observation and mimesis required for portraiture.[7] On the whole, English women were dismissed as inferior in mental powers and few cultural or political institutions permitted their participation.[8]

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[4] Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Genius* (1774), cited in Garry Kelly, "Bluestocking Feminism and Writing in Context," in *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestockings Circle, 1738-1785*, ed. Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Eger (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999), xxxv.
[5] Kelly, "Bluestockings Feminism," xxxiii. For more on the construction of gender in relation to scientific discourse, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).
[6] Kelly, "Bluestockings Feminism," xxii.
[7] Elizabeth Eger and Lucy Peltz, *Brilliant Women: Eighteenth-Century Bluestockings* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2008), 80.
[8] Eger and Peltz, *Brilliant Women*, 32.

Despite the fact that the enlightenment is sometimes considered a period of intense patriarchal oppression, women patrons and creators nevertheless contributed to the development of English culture.[9] In particular, the influence of female patronage was felt in England and beyond.[10] Of particular significance was the patronage of Queen Charlotte, who fostered the careers of many women artists and was the first monarch to employ them in large number. Well-established figures like Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser benefited from the Queen's support. Heidi Strobel writes that Charlotte almost certainly played a role in these women artists attaining member status in the founding of the Royal Academy. In her patronage, Charlotte did not encourage a hierarchy of genres or media. She encouraged wax work, engraving, miniature painting, marble sculpture, fan painting and embroidery. Charlotte also commissioned transparencies, today considered a "minor" art form, from Robert Adams and Benjamin West. These so-called "minor arts" were traditionally open to women and many were in fact dominated by them. Charlotte was also an avid music lover and supporter of theatre and selected authors for house appointments.

Whatever gains were achieved by women artists, however, it was often not without the requisite social standing, patronage and support of men. If patronage was significant in shaping ideas about women's achievements as artists, more significant in the long run was the development of art associations. The first associations were the Free Society of Artists (FSA), the Society of Artists of Great Britain (SAGB) and the Society for the

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[9] Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1997), 111. See also Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).
[10] Heidi Strobel, "Artistic Patronage at the Court of Queen Charlotte" (PhD diss. University of Illinois, 2002), iii.

Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce (SEAMC). These groups did not make any great distinctions between media or genre and exhibited all forms of art production. Women also figured prominently in these societies, something that changed with the inauguration of the Royal Academy. The Royal Academy (RA) was founded through royal patronage in 1768. Judging from his commissions, George III, husband of Charlotte, would have traced a sharp distinction between genres of art, favouring history painting. As a founding patron, the King encouraged history painting through the awarding of prestigious commissions. For example, following the completion of a series of canvases, thirty years in the making, George III acknowledged Benjamin West's role in "carrying the higher department of History Painting into effect."[11] Among the forty founding members of the RA, Kauffman and Moser were the only women. While their accumulated social and cultural capital was generally acknowledged, these artists were likely supported by the Queen.[12] The inclusion of these two women at the moment of the formation of the Academy is noted as somewhat exceptional in comparison with other corporate institutions and learned societies.[13] For example, the Royal Society for music and the Royal Academy of Music did not admit women. Kauffman and Moser did not share in all of the rights and privileges granted to male members, however; they could not hold the position of Professor and it was suggested that they submit their votes in absentia.[14]

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[11] Strobel, *Artistic Patronage at the Court of Queen Charlotte*, 7.
[12] See Strobel, *Artistic Patronage at the Court of Queen Charlotte*.
[13] Eger and Peltz, *Brilliant Women*, 80.
[14] It was not until 1922 that a third female member was admitted to the RA. Nineteenth-century women artists could only exhibit in the RA annual exhibition as non-members. Eventually, in 1856 women artists countered the Academy's bias by forming the Society of Women Artists, which provided them with artistic instruction and space for exhibiting.

2.1 Johann Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1772. Oil on canvas, 101.1 x 147.5 cm. This group portrait of members of the Royal Academy in studio includes Koffman and Moser in the form of wall portraits because women were banned from the study of the nude. This painting becomes a representation of the procedures used to bar women from access to art education.

2.2 Henry Singleton, *Royal Academicians in General Assembly*, 1795. Oil on canvas, 198.1 x 259 cm. In this official painting of members of the Royal Academy, Kauffman and Moser are seen at the centre back.

Despite its link to royal patronage, the RA was part of a movement to professionalize artists and we should consider it to be one of the manifestations of the bourgeois enlightenment. It was not unlike many other associations whose members sought professional status and as such represented a step away from courtly culture. Middle-class identity at this time was being shaped by kinship and capital.[15] Women artists were typically either born into or married into artist families. Some differences were nevertheless made between sons and daughters. Male siblings received regular instruction in art with life drawing while female siblings were trained at home. The girls' instruction was irregular and usually provided by a family member or a friend of the family. The style of girls' instruction, based on apprenticeship and copying, carried well into the nineteenth century. According to Deborah Cherry, this gender distinction perpetuated differentiated professional identities for men and women. The Royal Academy in particular barred women from life drawing classes, an aspect of art education that was necessary to the practice of historical painting. Such distinctions and double standards between public and private life were the basis of the development of an ideology of separate spheres.[16] In the eighteenth century, this notion of separate spheres differentiated professional identities for men and women, with women often working in media and genres that became devalued as the century advanced. What is therefore striking about the earliest public exhibitions of the work of living artists is that they included works by women and men, professionals and amateurs, and in a variety of

[15] Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London: Routledge, 1993), 20.
[16] See Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

media. In comparison with the exclusive aims of the RA, these exhibitions were remarkably open to different media, genres and practitioners.

The first public exhibition of contemporary art in Britain was held in 1760. In his study of this event, Matthew Hargraves describes the emergence of public exhibitions as an innovative and transformative feature of artistic life in Great Britain.[17] The exhibition of works of art by living artists was held in the great hall of The Society for the Encouragement of Art, Manufacture and Commerce. The SEAMC actively promoted the "polite and useful arts" in order to stimulate British manufactures, and though not a society of artists, it played an important role in this context.[18] It was founded in 1754 by a small group of nobles and gentlemen to "encourage the talents of their countrymen."[19] It supported both men and women, and awarded prizes, including a category for young women artists twenty years of age or younger, which, as Charlotte Grant has noted, "complicates our current model of the relation between women and 'the public spirit' in the practices and discourses of eighteenth-century art."[20] Though usually accredited to a group of artists organized under the name of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, the first exhibition was actually organized by mostly the same people but under the different name of Present Artists.[21] The only previous public display of contemporary British art had been at a charitable institution, the Foundling Hospital, to which artists had donated

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[17] Matthew Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame": The Society of Artists of Great Britain 1760-1791* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 1.
[18] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 21.
[19] Algernon Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791, The Free Society of Artists, 1761-1783, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and Their Work From the Foundation of the Societies to 1791* (Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1907), 295.
[20] Charlotte Grant, "The Choice of Hercules: The Polite Arts and 'Female Excellence' in Eighteenth-Century London," in *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830*, ed. Elizabeth Eger at al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 75-103.
[21] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 25.

works in the hope of connecting with consumers "without allegations of 'immodest solicitation'."[22] The display of contemporary British art at the hospital elicited great public interest even though it did not serve a very large number of artists.

In November 1759, a "General Meeting of all Artists" was called "to consider a Proposal for the Honour and Advancement of the Arts."[23] At this meeting, it was agreed that once a year "Every Painter, Sculptor, Architect, Engraver, Chaser, Seal-Cutter & Medallist may Exhibit their several Performances."[24] Motivated by the example of the French Salon, British artists organized to present the first public exhibition. Housed in the great hall of the SEAMC, it encountered some difficulties resulting from the regulations mandated by that Society. Artists expressed frustration with the imposition of a policy of free admission and with the display of awarded works amidst the others, which led to the assumption of parity among all works. While many artists remained with the SEAMC the following year, more chose to leave it and two competing groups were established: the Free Society of Artists and the Society of Artists of Great Britain.

The first exhibit of the SAGB was held in 1761 at the Spring Gardens, a rented commercial site normally reserved for auctions. The FSA continued to show at the SEAMC and maintained its founding commitments of free admission and support for distressed artists and their widows and children through the sale of the exhibition catalogue.[25] The SAGB consisted of a large number of artists from the first show. This

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[22] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 11.
[23] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 5.
[24] Minutes of the General Meeting, 12 November 1759, quoted in Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 5.
[25] *A Catalogue of the Paintings, Sculptures, Models, Drawings, Engravings, Etc. Now Exhibiting at the Great Room of the Society Instituted for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce* (1762) cited in Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 36.

group's exhibitions were well attended and commercially successful. They charged admission, which they justified as a way of limiting the access of those who "cannot be judges or purchasers of works of art" and who "frightened away those, whose approbation was most desired."[26] This strategy was not very different from the way the catalogue operated as an admission ticket for the FSA exhibition under the SEAMC. However, unlike the SEAMC, the SAGB moved away from charity and limited disbursement to indigent colleagues.[27] For this, the SAGB had to contest accusations of self-interest. The combination of commercial pursuits with the idea of art as benefiting national achievement is something that would later solidify under the RA. From its inception, the SAGB suffered internal unrest, most of which arose between contending groups attempting to cultivate the kind of public that it thought would best support its own art. Among the kinds of competing interests, there were artists who were making art for connoisseurs, and others who felt that the elite hindered the advancement of British art in general.[28] Eventually, a split in the leadership led to the 1768 founding of a third association of artists, the Royal Academy of the Arts.

Joshua Reynolds was the first president of the RA. In his opening address he remarked that the RA was founded not only to exhibit work, which it did on an annual basis, but to teach and cultivate the "polite arts" to the benefit of the whole British nation.[29] In their request for support from George III, the member artists described themselves as painters,

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[26] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 37.
[27] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 27.
[28] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 32.
[29] Joshua Reynolds at the opening address to his fellow RA members. Cited in Sidney Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1968), 21.

sculptors and architects.[30] Because they wished to not have to work independently but as a school of art and design, they hoped to build a British art community that was comparable to those officially supported organizations on the Continent.[31] The RA did not establish its dominance without some struggle as both the FSA and the SAGB rivaled this new, monarchically supported institution. Nevertheless, the RA emerged as the leading society representing the visual arts in Britain. The FSA lasted until 1783 and the SAGB remained strong only until the mid-1770s. The tasks taken up by the RA were no less than the redefinition of art and the artist's role in British society.[32] Reynolds' public lectures as RA director were central in the development of new ideas. According to John Barrell, the unifying principle behind Reynolds' *Discourses* is that art functions "to create and to confirm a republic, or at least a community, of taste."[33] Creating such a community was not only based on the quality of work, but was invested in a classification of media that would render some practices obsolete.

While we are more than familiar with the paintings of Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Reynolds, it is worth examining in some detail the various media that were presented in the first exhibitions of these art societies. The minutes of the 1759 General Meeting of all Artists (by the Present Artists) that led to the first public exhibition (at the SEAMC) included various trades, from painter to metal engraver. At the second meeting it was decided that "no copies be admitted to the exhibition."[34] This would seem to have been its only official rule. It was conceived primarily to restrict the inclusion of engravings

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[30] Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy*, 43-4.
[31] Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy*, 42-3.
[32] The SAGB archives are now housed at the Royal Academy in London.
[33] John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: The Body of the Public* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 70.
[34] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 5.

that consisted of copies of paintings. The various practices that are listed in the catalogue include 130 works by 68 "masters," divided into the following categories: paintings, sculptures, models and engravings, and drawings and engravings on copper. Hargraves notes that pastels, needlework and wax models were also included, as well as "other handicrafts." He also believes that "there was no clear academic hierarchy in operation" and that art was "being defined in the broadest possible manner."[35] Hargraves recognizes, however, that the absence of a carefully planned layout leaves some things to be assumed. According to his analysis, the following year, rivalries emerged along the lines of media. In a similar manner, the FSA displayed needlework in the same category as drawings and engravings, as well as design objects and other curiosities alongside "art in its higher branches."[36] The SAGB, on the other hand, brought in measures that excluded pupils, apprentices and those under 21 years of age. They also limited membership to qualified artists in order to increase their standing as professionals. Through their annual exhibition they aimed to foster a more "liberal image," a "loftier" show that included the leading artists displaying "notable specimens of art."[37] In 1761 the SAGB Committee was primarily formed by painters. This Committee screened the entries for the annual exhibition and through an elected body, a hierarchy emerged, leading to discrimination between the liberal arts and the mechanical arts.[38] Hargraves emphasizes that the first SAGB exhibition did not include needlework. While this may be true it is also true that the second one did. In 1762, a "copy of a picture; in

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[35] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 23. Hargraves uses the term "handicraft" without clear definition.
[36] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 28-29.
[37] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 29.
[38] Hargraves, *"Candidates for Fame"*, 33.

needlework" was entered anonymously by a "lady from Yorkshire." Horace Walpole, one of the first art historians of this period, identifies the artist as E. Morritt.[39] Eliza Morritt is one of the three prominent eighteenth-century needlepainters, thought to be the first to reproduce well-known paintings.[40] In general it is believed that she did not exhibit her needleworks publicly and I mention her inclusion in the second SAGB exhibition in order to demonstrate that the admission of embroideries by that society was not limited to its years of decline.[41] It also leads to the view that needleworks could be regarded at that time as notable specimens of art.

In *The Subversive Stitch*, Rozsika Parker argues that over the last 500 years, there has been a progressive devalorization of embroidery.[42] We can see that with the development of enlightenment notions of industry and art, and of class and gender, the status of embroidery underwent rapid mutations. The inclusion of embroidered works in early FSA and SAGB exhibitions, along with a variety of other "minor arts" such as coloured straw, raised paper, crayon painting, cut vellum, hair work, ivory carving, watercolour, cut cork and cut shells, leads to a view of the RA as a far less open institution than its competitors. Regulation number one of the RA's *Instrument of Foundation*, the laws for

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[39] Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain*, 4. According to Samuel Sloan's *Architecture – The Late Georgian Period*, Walpole would have owned a needlepainting by Mary Knowles, a landscape of Strawberry Hill based on a painting by van Uden.
[40] Margaret Swain states that the earliest known needlepainter "appears" to be Anne Eliza Morritt. See Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures* (Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications, 1994), 18.
[41] According to Swain, Morritt did not show publicly. See Margaret Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures* (Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications, 1994), 18-21. When I visited the RA in the summer of 2009, the archivist that I met explained away Mary Linwood's status in terms of her inclusion in an SAGB exhibition in the 1770s, in other words, as an artist whose career was (or should have been, according to the canonical account) in decline because it was associated with an institution in decline.
[42] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1984).

the establishment and the government of the RA signed by the King, stated that an Academician was to be limited to "artists by profession... that is to say Painters, Sculptors, or Architects."[43] As well, their number was to be limited to forty. Concerning exhibitions, the *Instrument* states: "There shall be an Annual Exhibition of Paintings, Sculptures, and Designs, which shall be open to all Artists of distinguished merit."[44] Most significantly, for our study of needleplainting, an April 10, 1770 notice published by the RA Secretary, F.M. Newton, states that "No Copies what ever, nor any Imitations of Painting in Needle-work, artificial Flowers, Shell-work, or any thing of that Kind, will be admitted, nor any Pictures, Ic. with out Frames."[45]

Algernon Graves' 1907 dictionary of FSA and SAGB exhibitions records more than 13,000 works exhibited from 1760 to 1791. It identifies the artists and their trade status. Very often an artist that specialized in one medium is shown to have submitted work in another. For instance, Francis Laine, a miniature painter and member of the Academy of Paris, presented several pieces of hair work with the SAGB in 1776.[46] Sculptors submitted works that are today better known as utilitarian objects – chandeliers, sarcophagi, tripods, wax models and works of inlaid marble. Artistic designations such as "sculptor" could therefore obscure the diversity of products.[47] Excellence was

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[43] Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy*, 209.
[44] Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy*, 212.
[45] Newspaper clipping found in the RA archives, source not identified. The item was presented to me by the archivist, Mark Pomeroy.
[46] Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain*, 141.
[47] We find in this list architect, bead worker, carver, copplestone warre painter, crayon painter, decorator, designer, enamel painter, enameller, engraver, etcher, fresco painter, furniture designer, gem engraver, glass painter, hair worker, inlayer, medalist, metal worker, miniature painter, needle worker, painter, paper cutter, poker painter, sculptor, seal engraver, shell worker, stained glass painter, wax modeler, wood carver. The various items on display lead to an even wider variety of products, which includes bistre,

recognized in these minor arts at this time. For example, Catherine Andras rose to eminence as wax modeler to Queen Charlotte, and Samuel Percy, also a wax modeler, was greatly sought after.[48] As well, Mary Knowles, who embroidered the portrait of the King in 1771, was highly praised.

While painting may have enjoyed a place at the top of the visual arts hierarchy, outside of the arts societies painters did not necessarily fare so well. In fashionable circles, painters like Reynolds began to gain respect, but attitudes were slow in changing. On the whole, Reynolds was assigned a menial status comparable to that of the average day-labourer.[49] In literary circles, ignorance of painting was not considered a stigma, while at the same time, painters could not express a lack of knowledge about literature without being dismissed.[50] By the early nineteenth century this situation had changed dramatically and painters had gained a fashionable status. In Britain, the years 1840 to 1880 are considered the golden age of painting.[51] The notion of labour also underwent a radical transformation in the mid-nineteenth century, moving from a low status activity to

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clay, crystal, coloured straw, cut cork, cut paper, embroidery (satin stitch, tent stitch, tambour work), engraved work in various media, etching, gilt paper, gold, human hair, hair on ivory, Indian ink, intaglio, kit cat, marble, mezzotint, mother-of-pearl inlay, mosaic, oil, papier maché, pen-and-ink, plaster, preserved flowers, raised paper, scagliola in marble, sculpted sulphur, seaweed, shells, silver plate, stained glass, tapestry, terra-cotta, vellum cut with scissors, watercolour, wax, wood inlay, and worked in silk.

[48] Marcia Pointon, "Portrait! Portrait!! Portrait!!!" in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibition at Somerset House 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 97.

[49] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 290-1.

[50] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 291.

[51] Julie F. Codell, "Artists' Professional Societies: Production, Consumption, and Aesthetics," in *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. Brian Allen (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 169-87.

one that was highly charged with religious and moral significance.[52] Labour became identified as a masculine activity and now art, conceived as the play of genius, was regarded as labour's complement.[53] The rise in status of art and labour, however, was arguably accompanied by the decline in status of women, both generally and within the visual arts in particular. Obviously the enlightenment produced contradictory results and the "democratic idea" was only begrudgingly applied to women. In the next section I focus on the eighteenth-century practice of needlepainting and in particular on the work of Eliza Morritt, Mary Knowles and Mary Linwood. Linwood stands out as an exception and as we shall discover the exhibition of her work causes a great deal of confusion as it occupies an unusual position between that of the elite amateur and the professional artist.

Mary Linwood and the Needlepainters

In the eighteenth century, education was not widely accessible, but for those young women who did get some training, embroidery was a standard part of the curriculum. Pictorial embroidery in particular was widely taught and many embroidered pictures of high quality were produced.[54] Needlepainting, a form of pictorial embroidery made to look like the painting that it copies, emerged around the mid-eighteenth century.[55] In a

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[52] Tim Barringer, "The Gendering of Artistic Labour in Mid-Victorian Britain," in *Representations of Gender from Prehistory to the Present*, ed. Moira Donald and Linda Hurcombe (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 153.
[53] Barringer, "The Gendering of Artistic Labour in Mid-Victorian Britain," 153.
[54] See Betty Ring, *Girlhood Embroidery: American Samplers and Pictorial Needlework 1650-1850* (New York: Knopf, 1993). Although Ring's book is focused on the U.S., she acknowledges that pictorial needlework emerges in England.
[55] See Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures*. Note that dictionaries from the period define painting as representation in general without specifying what medium is used. Paint appears as a verb rather than a noun. In this sense, needlepaintings were sometimes referred to simply as paintings. See for example, Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the*

rare text on the subject, Margaret Swain identifies Morritt, Knowles and Linwood as the only three well-known practitioners of needlepainting. I have also come across a 1909 review for a book that makes reference to a 1755 letter that names a Miss Gray as an early practitioner who "astonished 'the world of painters' with her copies of Rubens in worsted work."[56] Despite their high standing in their day, opinions regarding these women and their work declined by the end of the nineteenth century. A late twentieth century account gives similar short shrift to women, stating that Linwood "deserves" to be remembered for her "remarkable collection of pictures," but that her talent was "more curious than creative" and that her achievements should be seen in the context of a period when women of Mary Linwood's background had, quoting Jane Austen, "little to do but to read poetry, retail local gossip and await the attentions of the gentlemen."[57] What in fact did women like Linwood do at this time and what were their concerns?

Anne Eliza Morritt was one of the earliest practitioners of needlepainting. Although hers are the oldest Georgian needlepaintings to survive, little is known or written about them. She and her sister, with whom she lived, were highly educated. Letters by her nephew discuss her sister Frances' advocacy of "petticoat independence" and the "advantages of travel for ladies," which suggests that Morritt would have participated in discussions on women's roles and contributions to English society.[58] Her work was known mostly to those who visited her home. Arthur Young, a traveller who came to

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English Language (1755), accessed February 24, 2011, http://www.archive.org/details/dictionaryofeng101johnuoft.

[56] A.H. "*Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*. By Mrs Lowes. London: Fisher Unwin. 5s. net," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 14:70 (January 1909): 246.

[57] Susan Lasdun, "A Taste of Crewels and Yarns: Mary Linwood's Needlework Pictures," *Country Life* (April 15, 1976): 958-9.

[58] J.B.S. Morritt cited in Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures*, 19.

stay with her and her sister, recorded in *A Six Months' Tour Through the North of England* of 1770 that "[b]y far the most curious things to be seen in York are the copies of several capital paintings, worked by Anne Morritt, a lady of most surprising genius."[59] He also writes that "it is impossible to view her works without astonishment; for certain the act of imitation in work is carried by her to the highest point of perfection." He goes on: "to copy fine paintings ... with a grace, a brilliance and an elegance superior to the originals, was reserved for this most ingenious lady."[60] A Scottish traveller who went to see "the extraordinary sewed work" also mentions her in 1775.[61] Benjamin West painted her portrait, representing her seated with needle in hand before an embroidery frame stretched with a copy of Andrea Sacci's *Vision of St Romuald*. Morritt continued to embroider until her death. Her last piece is dated 1796, the year before she died.[62] Her epitaph includes the lines: "Blest shade while GENIUS in thy early days/Fired thee to emulate the pencils praise/To seize the painters powers without the name/And soar on female attributes to fame/This verse records how to these powers were join'd/The strongest, manliest energies of mind."[63]

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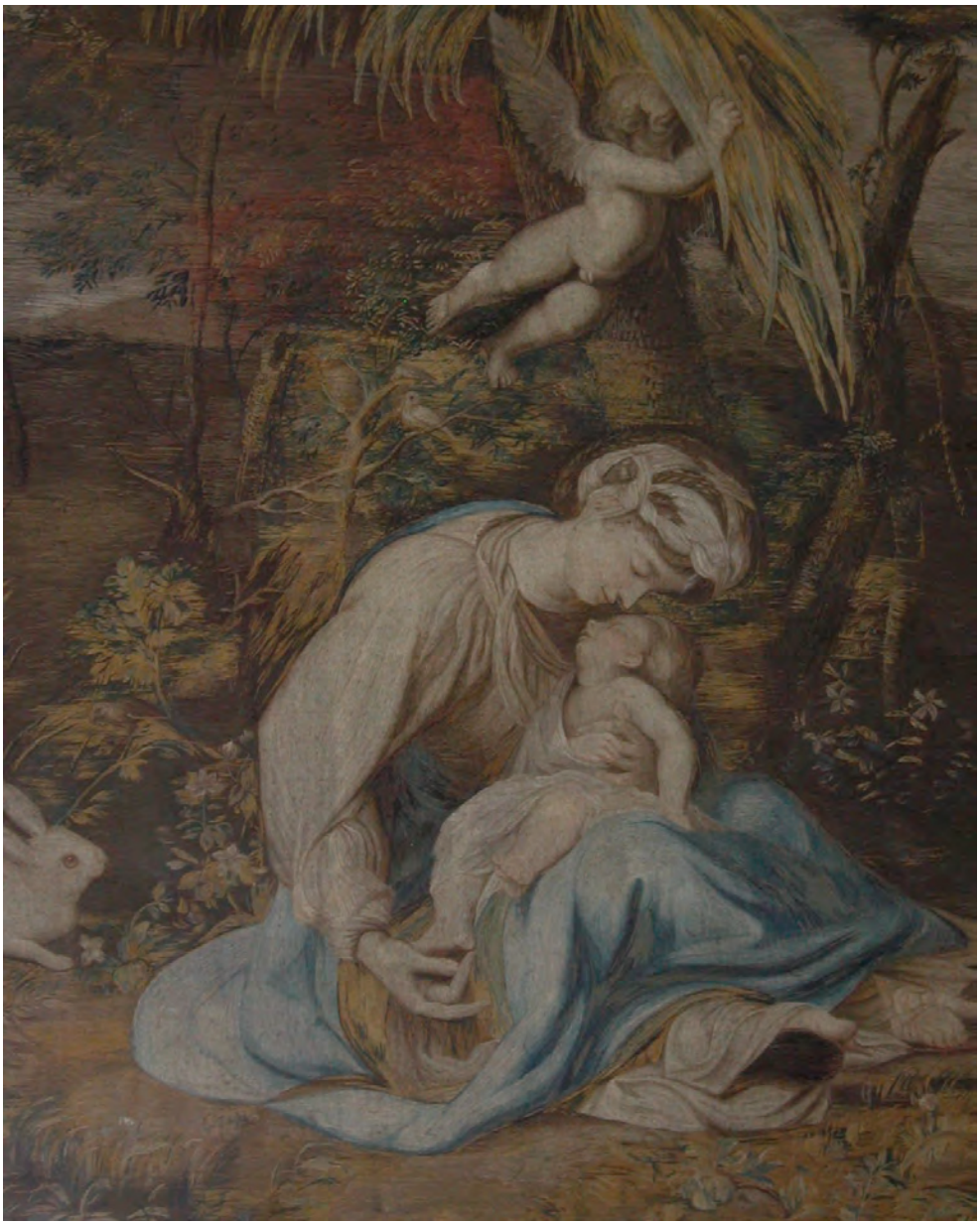
[59] Arthur Young, cited in Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures*, 19.
[60] See "History of Rokeby Park," accessed July 15, 2012, http://www.rokebypark.com.
[61] Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures*, 19.
[62] Forty-seven of Morritt's needlepaintings are preserved at Rokeby Park, the home of her brother and his descendents.
[63] Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures*, 19.

2.3 Benjamin West, *Miss Anne Eliza Morritt at her embroidery frame*, c.1773-8.



2.4 Morritt needlepainting at Rokeby Park. Embroidered picture.

Morritt's contemporary, Mary Knowles, was a Quaker and remains an important figure in English history.[64] Like Morritt, Knowles did not exhibit her work publicly, a decision that was taken in accordance with her religious beliefs. She was introduced to Queen

[64] About Knowles' Quakerism, see Jennings, *Gender, Religion and Radicalism in the Long Eighteenth Century*.

Charlotte by Benjamin West, an artist who had family ties to the Quakers. Knowles was commissioned by the Queen to produce a needlepainting of George III based on Johann Zoffany's 1771 portrait of him. She later stitched a second copy for herself.

2.5 Mary Morris Knowles, *Self-Portrait; Mary Knowles at her embroidery*, 1779. Embroidered wool, 89.2 x 84.5 cm. The Royal Collection, London. In this work she depicts herself embroidering the commissioned work for the Queen of Johann Zoffany's painting *George III* (1771). This self-portrait was also like made for Queen Charlotte.

2.6 Johann Zoffany, *George III*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 163.2 x 137.3 cm.

2.7 Mary Knowles, *George III (after a painting by Zoffany)*, 1771. Embroidered wool, 209.8 x 167.9 cm.

Knowles did not produce a great number of needlepaintings and her contemporaries knew her as much for her political writings as for her needlework. Through various publications and poems, she defended Quaker beliefs and famously challenged Samuel Johnson on issues concerning women's rights. If Knowles was able to contribute to the period's intellectual culture, however, it is in part because of the respect she earned through her needlepaintings. According to Judith Hennings, it was due to the recognition of her skill in embroidery that a publisher agreed to print her political and religious writings.[65] Both this link to erudition and the royal commission give us an idea of the extent to which needlepainting was a respected cultural practice.

The most distinguished needlepainter of this period, however, was Mary Linwood. Linwood exhibited primarily in London but also in Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast and Dublin. She was invited to show in Paris but political unrest made that impossible. Linwood was very prolific, producing as many as sixty copies of well-known paintings as well as a few works of her own design. She was born in Birmingham in 1755 to a family of entrepreneurs. Her father, Matthew Linwood, was a threadmaker, her brother Matthew was one of the best-known silversmiths in Birmingham and another brother, John, had a plating business.[66] After her father's bankruptcy in 1764, she moved with her parents to Leicester where her mother opened a boarding school for girls.[67] The school's advertisements emphasized the fact that instruction in needlework was taught, among other "genteel accomplishments." Linwood herself worked as a schoolmistress

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[65] Judith Jennings, *Gender, Religion, and Radicalism in the Long Eighteenth Century: The 'Ingenious Quaker' and Her Connections* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 38.
[66] Lasdun, "A Taste of Crewels and Yarns," 959.
[67] Aucott, *Women of Courage, Vision and Talent*, 142.

for much of her life. The first substantial article about her, written in 1800, relates the following:

> In the year 1782, a friend sent her, for inspection, a large collection of prints, in various styles of engraving, with no other view than that of affording a casual amusement. Inspecting them with the eye of genius, Miss Linwood conceived that the force of an engraving might be united with the softness of a mezzotinto: but being totally unacquainted with any process in that art, she had no instrument, by which to make the experiment, but her needle. With that she endeavoured to realize her first idea, by copying such prints as most engaged her attention, with the rovings of pure coloured silk, upon white sarsenet. The needle, in her hand, soon became like the plastic chisel of Praxiteles, upon a block of marble: she touched the ground-work, and the figures started into form. Encouraged by the liberal applause bestowed upon these first attempts, she made copies of them upon an enlarged scale...[68]

Writing in 1804, Mrs Pilkington states that these first *printworks*, copies of prints in silk thread and hair on a silk support, were made to resemble these gifted prints. She states that Linwood's first needlepainting was attempted in 1785 and that the following year, she submitted needlework to the SEAMC and received a complimentary medal for the "superior excellence of her work."[69]

In the course of her career, Linwood became acquainted with many people working in the field of art and she was recognized by many patrons and supported by other artists. Of those who are most well-known today, her acquaintances included John Constable and Benjamin West. Constable in fact sold his first painting to Linwood.[70] A less well-known colleague was Joseph Farington. Farington's diary documented with amazement

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[68] "Biographical Sketch of Miss Linwood," *The Monthly Mirror* (January 1800): 7-8.
[69] Mrs Pilkington, *Memoirs of Celebrated Female Characters Who Have Distinguished Themselves by Their Talent and Virtues in Every Age and Nation* (London: Albion Press,1804), 233.
[70] R.B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence II: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)* (London: Suffolk Records Society, 1964), 27.

the fact that thirty-four of her works equaled 15,000 square feet of needlework surface.[71] Linwood's celebrity was captured in several miniature portraits of her that were exhibited at the Royal Academy. Paintings of her were made by Sarah Price, Susannah Shelley, Maria Cosway, William Grimaldi and J. Oliver. A drawing in pastel was made by John Russell and a watercolour by Richard Westall. As well, engravings were made after two oil paintings by Sir William Beechey and John Hoppner.[72]

Linwood was also known by Matthew Boulton of the Lunar Society, whose daughter Anne studied embroidery with her.[73] Linwood received advice and support from Boulton, who recommended and arranged for her to present her work to the Queen. In letters to his daughter, who was studying at the Linwood boarding school in Leicester in 1785, Boulton wrote that it would be impossible for her to study with Linwood without improving her taste, her hand and her heart, and that "sparks... dart from her [Linwood's] finger ends".[74] In a letter to Boulton, dated March 8, 1787, Linwood wrote:

> My Mother informed me in a conversation she had with you, that you was so polite as to express your approbation of my intention respecting an Exhibition – but previous to that you wish'd the Pictures could be properly introduced to their Majesties – and that you would give the latter a thought – if such an event should take place it must be before the 15th of next Month if possible, as on that day I propose the Exhibition to Open, 'tis the Monday after Easter Week – I intend being in London the 6th or 7th – a Gentilman in town who is so obliging as to be

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[71] Lasdun, "A Taste for Crewels and Yarns," 958. Lasdun notes that Farington also commented on the fact that her rented rooms at Hanover Square cost £1000 for three years.

[72] Lasdun, "A Taste for Crewels and Yarns," 959. The Hoppner painting is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. An undated letter by Linwood in the Leicester Records Office mentions that a certain Mr Ridley was been printing pictures of her without her prior approbation.

[73] *The Other Side of the Coin: Women and the Lunar Men*, exhibition catalogue, accessed, January 5, 2008, www.search.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk/content/files/81/76/348.txt.

[74] Matthew Bolton, letters to his daughter Anne Boulton, dated August 6, 1785 and August 17, 1785, Birmigham Archives MS 3782/14/76/7 and MS 3782/14/76/8.

> my Agent, writes me, he thinks he can procure a suitable Room in Pall-Mall – which is a situation I much more approve, but I must pay Rent for it from Lady-Day, which is the reason I wish not the Exhibition pospon'd and that I thus beg the favour of your early attention – I do not know anyone but the Earl of Stamford that I could directly from myself apply to, and he is seldom in Town, and I believe not a ministerial Gentleman – yes, one other I recollect if he is in England, the Duke of Dorset, if you think him a proper person – I could take the liberty of writing to him – if you can favour me with any assistance, or point out a more proper line I shall be greatly oblig'd...[75]

Boulton wrote back, advising her that she should not show her work in public until she has had a chance to show it to the Queen, and that she should until then "throw a veil" on her merits. He considered the Queen to be a "great patron of genius and female merits" and so Linwood should present herself as an independent gentlewoman with dignity of character and not someone who has come asking for a favour. "Those that ask shall not have," he writes, and by the same token, Linwood must not refuse the Queen either "feathers or straws."[76] She should go with an independent spirit, yet determined to exceed her in politeness and generosity. Linwood later responded how she was instructed to place her works according to the Queen's directions "to the greatest advantage" in her drawing room. "I was pleased," she wrote, "to see they made no inconsiderable appearance."[77] The Queen, she says, was much pleased and expressed regrets that the King had previous engagements and could not see them that morning. Linwood stayed in the company of the Queen and the Princess for up to an hour and Charlotte expressed her approbation of a public exhibition, the works meriting attention and being "very

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[75] Mary Linwood, letter to Matthew Bolton, dated March 8, 1787, Birmingham Archives MS 3782/12/32/35.
[76] Matthew Bolton, letter to Mary Linwood, dated March 17, 1787, Birmingham Archives MS3782/12/6.
[77] Mary Linwood, letter to Matthew Bolton, dated April 21, 1787, Birmingham Archives MS3782/12/32/59.

beautiful."[78] A selected few were to be left for the King's inspection and Linwood was instructed to leave them all in the ballroom as this would be considered a great compliment.

2.8 John Hoppner, *Miss Mary Linwood, Artist in Needlework*, c.1800. Oil on canvas, 91.4 x 71.1 cm. Linwood is depicted with her artists' materials. The fact that she is depicted holding her materials rather than at work gives some indication of her status as a liberal artist rather than a technician.

[78] Mary Linwood, letter to Matthew Bolton, dated April 21, 1787, Birmingham Archives MS3782/12/32/59

2.9 P.W. Tomkins, *Miss Linwood*, 1806. Colour-printed stipple engraving, 49.4 x 39.3 cm. Linwood is posed here with a sketching portfolio and pencil.

Linwood's correspondences from this period provide indications that she went to great lengths to come into contact with or purchase paintings that she could work from.[79] Lasdun mentions a letter from Christie's auction house suggesting that she bought works to copy.[80] It would seem that she also borrowed paintings against money, this being the case of a Gainsborough that was owned by Richard Sheridan.[81] She also stayed with families whose collections included paintings that she could copy. Her needlepaintings were appreciated for their verisimilitude to these paintings. Commenting on Linwood's exhibition in Leicester Square, Mary Kirby wrote in 1888: "they looked so much like paintings that it was hard to believe they had been done by a needle."[82] Her copy of Gainsborough's *Woodman in a Storm*, for example, was considered an "accurate copy."[83] Miss Lambert states that she drew and embroidered her works without assistance.[84] Although engravings were popular in this period, and could have been used by Linwood as patterns, I have found no mention of this in any of the extant sources. What we do know is that she worked with a coarse linen ground that was woven specifically for her as well as very fine crewel wools dyed to her specifications.[85] Most of her worsted wools

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[79] See for example Mary Linwood, letter to Sir Tassie, dated April 24, 1805, Leicester Records Office.
[80] Lasdun, "A Taste for Crewels and Yarns," 958.
[81] An article from 1800 states: "From the late and the present President of the Royal Academy her works have received the highest and most generous praise; and Sir Joshua Reynolds gave a sanction to his approbation by pointing out such of his own pictures as would have the best effect in their copies. By him, as well as by the late Earl of Exeter and Gainsborough, she was favoured with many capital paintings, of which her admirable imitations are now exhibiting in Hanover Square." In "Mary Linwood," *The Lady's Monthly Museum* (July 1800): 4.
[82] Kirby cited in Aucott, *Women of Courage, Vision and Talent*, 145.
[83] Pamela Warner, *Embroidery: A History* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1991), 139.
[84] Miss Lambert, *The Hand Book of Needlework* (New York: Wilry and Putnam, 1843), 13.
[85] Warner, *Embroidery*, 139.

were dyed by entrepreneur friends that she knew in Leicester.[86] She also dyed them herself when she needed to. A contemporary, William Gardiner of Leicester, described her practice as follows:

> I have understood that Miss Linwood's mode is analogous to that of a painter; she first sketches the outline, then the parts in detail and brings out the whole of the design by degrees. I once saw her at work, accoutred as she was with pincushions all around her neck, stuck with needles threaded with worsted of every colour, and after having touched the picture with a needle, instead of a brush, she would recede five or six paces to view the effect.[87]

According to embroidery historian Pamela Warner, Linwood's work was much finer than Morritt's and Knowles' and the stitching was very small, making it such that even close up it was possible to mistake the work for a painting.[88]

2.10 Unknown artist, *View of Mary Linwood's gallery*, c.1810. Watercolour on paper, 7.5 x 11.5 cm.

[86] Mrs T. Fielding Johnson, *Glimpses of Ancient Leicester in Six Periods* (1906) cited in Aucott, *Women of Courage, Vision and Talent*, 143.
[87] Cited in Aucott, *Women of Courage, Vision and Talent*, 143.
[88] Warner, *Embroidery*, 139.

EXHIBITION

OF

MISS LINWOOD'S

PICTURES

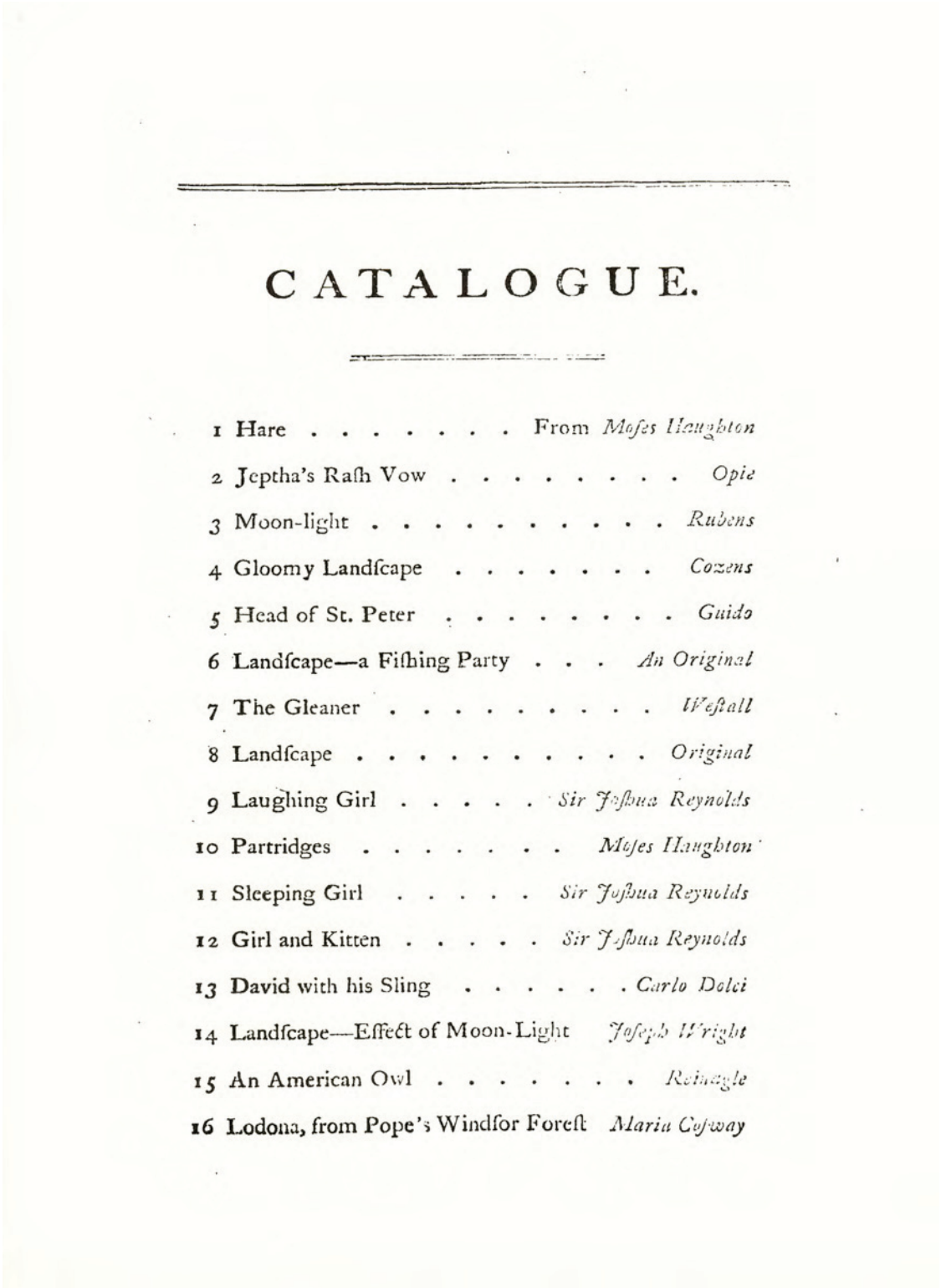
AT THE

HANOVER SQUARE CONCERT-ROOMS.

OPEN AT NINE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

Admittance One Shilling

E. Rider, Printer, Little-Britain



CATALOGUE.

1 Hare . . . . . From *Moſes Haughton*

2 Jeptha's Raſh Vow . . . . . *Opie*

3 Moon-light . . . . . *Rubens*

4 Gloomy Landſcape . . . . . *Cozens*

5 Head of St. Peter . . . . . *Guido*

6 Landſcape—a Fiſhing Party . . . *An Original*

7 The Gleaner . . . . . *Weſtall*

8 Landſcape . . . . . *Original*

9 Laughing Girl . . . . . *Sir Joſhua Reynolds*

10 Partridges . . . . . *Moſes Haughton*

11 Sleeping Girl . . . . . *Sir Joſhua Reynolds*

12 Girl and Kitten . . . . . *Sir Joſhua Reynolds*

13 David with his Sling . . . . . *Carlo Dolci*

14 Landſcape—Effect of Moon-Light *Joſeph Wright*

15 An American Owl . . . . . *Reinagle*

16 Lodona, from Pope's Windſor Foreſt *Maria Cofway*

2.11 Mary Linwood, *Exhibition of Miss Linwood's pictures at the Hanover Square concert rooms*, c.1800, cover and first page of exhibition catalogue.

Though many upper and middle-class women practiced embroidery, none achieved Linwood's level of skill and professionalism. In 1776 and 1778 she exhibited with the SAGB and in 1786 with the SEAMC. She attempted numerous times to show with the Royal Academy but was unsuccessful. Because of this impossibility to show with the RA, which stipulated that no imitations of paintings would be admitted, she decided to show her work independently.[89] According to Marcia Pointon, the last quarter of the eighteenth century was characterized by a volatile and crowded art market and Linwood's work was at the top of the list of the cultural goods on offer.[90] Her first independent exhibition opened in 1787 in London at The Pantheon.[91] In 1798 she displayed her works in Hanover Square. A review from this period emphasizes her ingenuity and the merit of her needlepaintings. It praised them for the variety and gradation of tints that were used, which the reviewer stated, could not exceed the effects of pencil.[92] Her needlepainting of *The Woodman*, made after the artist Barker, was judged "a most impressive copy... and, in every species of pictorial merit, vies with the painting itself."[93] The review concludes by promoting the study of these works by "ladies desirous of attaining a proficiency in this wonderful art of the needle work."[94] For her exhibition in Hanover Square, Linwood also published a catalogue that she updated yearly. Her exhibitions had an entry fee, as

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[89] "Biographical Sketch of Miss Linwood," *The Monthly Mirror* (January 1800) 3; Newspaper clipping from an unidentified source dated April 10, 1777, held in the Royal Academy archives.
[90] Pointon, "Portrait! Portrait!! Portrait!!!," 97. As an example of the continuing prejudice against "minor arts," a wall label that identifies John Hoppner's oil painting of Miss Mary Linwood (c.1800) states: "Linwood's enterprise was an example of how the luxury goods trades began to use similar techniques of display to those used for high art." Displayed in room 120, Summer 2008.
[91] The rooms in The Pantheon had hitherto housed Joshua Reynolds' studio.
[92] *The Lady's Monthly Museum* 1 (August 1798): 143.
[93] *The Lady's Monthly Museum* 1 (August 1798): 143.
[94] "Mary Linwood," *The Lady's Monthly Museum* 1 (August 1798): 143.

was the custom at the time, and were very well attended. In the first year, a few months' attendance was estimated at over 40,000 visitors.[95] Between 1804 and 1808 her work toured outside of London and in 1805 her exhibition was one of the first public exhibitions to use gas lighting, which allowed for extended visiting hours.[96] Around 1808 she moved her exhibition to Leicester Square, an exhibition site that she renovated for the sole purpose of presenting her needlepaintings. It was described in an 1823 publication as "an interesting display of ingenuity and taste," and the works "copied with unparalleled taste and skill."[97] In her 1843 history of needlework, Miss Lambert celebrated Linwood's production as unsurpassed, either in ancient or modern times.[98] A contemporary account stated:

> Miss Linwood's Exhibition of needlework is one of those which has not ceased to create an interest after its novelty had in a measure subsided, and is deserving, did the pages of this work permit, of a minute description. This beautiful style of picturesque needlework is the invention of a Leicestershire lady, and consists, at present of 59 copies of the finest pictures of the English and foreign schools of art, possessing all the correct drawing, just colouring and light and shade, of the original pictures from which they were taken; in a word, Miss Linwood's exhibition is one of the most beautiful the metropolis can boast, and should unquestionably be witnessed, as it deserves to be, by every admirer of art.[99]

Linwood's work remained on display in Leicester Square until her death in 1845. Despite her celebrity, her needlepaintings had little value at the time of her death. In her lifetime, she had offered her works to the British Museum and to the House of Lords.

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[95] "Miss Linwood," *The Ladies' Monthly Museum* (October 1817): 183.
[96] Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) 2. Gas lighting was invented by William Murdoch in 1794. By 1805 gas was used to illuminate cotton mills in Manchester.
[97] *Leigh's New Picture of London*, 1823, cited in Robert Pierpoint, "Miss Linwood's Gallery, Leicester Square," *Notes and Queries* S10-V11:175 (April 13, 1907): 281-2.
[98] Miss Lambert, *The Hand Book of Needlework*, 13.
[99] From *Mogg's New Picture of London and Visitor's Guide to its Sights* (1844), accessed June 6, 2008, www.victorianlondon.org/entertainment/walhala.htm.

Both refused, however, and after her death the works were sold at auction for less than £1000.[100]

The historiography of this turn of events has tended to favour the view created at this time by an emergent modern art discourse. Few sources try to account for how this came about and ignore the issue of what gave needlepainting and other minor arts the lowly status that they had acquired by the mid-nineteenth century. To give an example, Richard Altick, writing in *The Shows of London* in 1978, states:

> From this record of what they were invited to pay to look at under the banner of art it is clear that as a class London exhibition-goers were credited with little aesthetic discrimination – and rightly so. They were willing to gaze at any mimicry of reality, no matter how grotesque, clumsy, unsuitable, or improbable: shellwork, fishbone flowers, paper constructions, glass work, waxen tableaux. Such objects were judged on two grounds: the dexterity of their makers and, as with panorams and other pictorial entertainments, their verisimilitude – despite the palpable incongruity, or at least the unconventionality, of the material employed. This was true, above all, of a major class of popular art, the specific literal imitations, in other media, of well-known works of art. (...) The predominant, almost legendary figure here is Mary Linwood...[101]

Altick cites the English novelist William Thackeray who related that such "gloomy" images of lions in worsted would "frighten any boy not born in Africa."[102] After an era of inspired imitations, Altick says, Miss Linwood's declension was precipitous. Bea Rowe, writing a few years before him, at the time of the centennial of Linwood's death,

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[100] It is very difficult to provide a direct translation of money values from one century to the next because of the ways they are dependent on context. If one was to attempt a comparative amount today (in 2010), £1000 (in 1846) might be worth £687,000 (in terms of labour value), £1,070,000 (in terms of income value), and £2,380,000 (in terms of economic power and according to wealth index). See Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, *Measuring Worth*, 2011, at www.measuringworth.com, accessed September 26, 2012.

[101] Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), 399-400.

[102] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 401.

concluded her short piece with the assertion that Linwood, although "an outstanding character of her day," was "completely lacking creative talent and invention."[103]

2.12 Mary Linwood, *Partridges (after a painting by Moses Haughton)*, c.1789. Embroidered wool, 58.5 x 48.3 cm.

[103] Bea Howe, "Pictures in Wool: Mary Linwood, 1755-1845," *Country Life* (October 12, 1945): 637.

2.13 Mary Linwood, *Landscape after painting by Salvator Rosa*, c.1790-1819. Embroidered wool, 67 x 52 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, 2009.

2.14 Mary Linwood, *Portrait of General Napoleon Bonaparte*, 1825. Needlepainting. Linwood met Napoleon in 1803 and this image was most likely based on sketches she made at that time.

Professionals and Amateurs

The history of the reception of Linwood's work provides an account of a practice that was valued differently in different historical contexts. Pointon makes the remarkable

observation that Linwood's exhibitions of needlepaintings became the "main challenge to the Royal Academy by the 1790s."[104] RA exhibitions at this time were comprised mostly of portraiture.[105] Portraiture was very popular among the class of people who could afford to commission paintings, but the quality of many of the portraits was not very good and the RA exhibition space itself was often full of people who were there only to be seen. In Sweden, the collection of the Royal Academy contains four embroidered works from the late eighteenth century, before this kind of work was excluded. One of these is a needlepainting and three are embroidered printworks.[106] Studying the Swedish context, Anna Lena Lindberg believes that their exclusion was strongly based on class, on a bourgeois prejudice against the elite, and to a lesser extent, on gender and the choice of materials.[107] Although not all of the artists were from the upper class, the activity of needlepainting was identified as an elite practice. She concludes: "[t]he art of embroidery being degraded as 'low' mirrors the fate of the aristocracy and its gradual loss of power in bourgeois society."[108] The fortunes of Linwood's needlepaintings are difficult to account for. Unlike most Royal Academy members, she did not sell her work, though she did receive very large offers. According to Warner, Linwood was offered 3000 guineas for her *Salvator Mundi* (1789), which was based on a work by Carlo

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[104] Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 2.
[105] Andrew Hemingway, "Art Exhibitions as Leisure-Class Rituals in Early Nineteenth-Century London," in *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. Brian Allen (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 95-108.
[106] These were made by Fredrika Eleonora von Duben, Ulrica Melin, Wendela Gustafva Sparre and Maria Catharina Polheimer.
[107] Anna Lena Linberg, "Through the Needle's Eye: Embroidered Pictures on the Threshold of Modernity," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31:4 (1998): 510.
[108] Linberg, "Through the Needle's Eye," 510.

Dolci.[109] Catherine of Russia had offered to purchase all of her works and the King of Poland was also a fervent admirer.[110] Another admirer of her work, Napoleon, awarded her the "Freedom of Paris." Linwood consequently embroidered a portrait of him. She also received invitations from Glasgow to house her collection there.[111] The fact that she was not interested in selling her work distinguished Linwood from the professional artists of her time. It brought her into the orbit of the eighteenth-century elite amateur. The success of her public exhibitions, however, makes it difficult to position her work as amateur production and so, despite her exclusion from the RA and despite the fact that she did not sell her work, she is best thought of as a professional artist.[112]

Because late eighteenth-century amateurs were independently wealthy, and did not depend on the sale of their work, they indulged in fanciful undertakings and the risks associated with minor arts. While their art making was a matter of choice rather than necessity, they nevertheless shared with professional artists the spirit of entrepreneurialism and the ideology of commercial capitalism.[113] As working artists

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[109] A guinea at that time was worth £1 and 1 shilling. This was considered a gentlemanly measure of money; tradesmen were paid in pounds and artists were paid in guineas. The value of 3000 guineas in 1799 would today (2010) be worth approximately £3,280,000 (in terms of labour value), £3,520,000 (in terms of income value), and £14,100,000 (in terms of economic power and according to wealth index). See Officer and Williamson, www.measuringworth.com, accessed September 26, 2012.

[110] This amount, often repeated, is cited in "Miss Linwood," *The Lady's Monthly Museum* (July 1800): 3. It would be roughly equivalent to £390,00 today.

[111] Warner, *Embroidery*, 140. See also Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures*, 21. And Mary Linwood letter to Lord Buchan, dated April 13, 1805. Item: perceval j82, Graham Robertson Reading Room, Fitzwilliams Museum, University of Cambridge.

[112] A document from 1821 states that despite the fact that the RA refused her admittance, Linwood received the "most generous and unqualified praise" from every RA president, "from the celebrated Sir Joshua Reynolds to the present," and from the most eminent artists." See "Miss Linwood," *La Belle Assemblée* 155 (November 1821): 196.

[113] Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 127-8.

sought to raise the standards of their profession through institutionalization, they increasingly associated genuine art with the liberal art virtues of genius and originality. Making work for public exhibition and sale, the professional artist made original works that displayed an individual style. Over time, amateur came to imply derivative work without a distinguished style. By the early nineteenth century, a new form of commercialized "amateur" production flourished and flooded the market. This created a problem for professional artists and not surprisingly, they identified consumers' indiscriminate taste as part of the problem. The commercialization of fine art was effected primarily through the sale of guidebooks. Despite the fact that these tended to teach out-of-date techniques and unoriginal styles, they represent a remarkable instance of the extent to which enlightenment encyclopedism and the dissemination of knowledge through publication reached into all spheres of human activity. As the public gained access to art through such guidebooks, amateur practices gradually became synonymous with women and domestic decoration.[114] The result of this is that men increasingly shied away from such amateur practices. Gender distinctions therefore played a significant role in the demarcation of the professional and a new type of amateur practice. The fate of the amateur also befell that of embroidery. By the nineteenth century it was identified almost exclusively with women's art practices. Not only was the work of bourgeois women downgraded in comparison to that of masculine high art, it became almost obligatory as a signifier of femininity.

The restructuring of art according to class and gender lines led to the naturalization of women's inclination for embroidery. This greatly influenced Linwood's status as an

[114] Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, 128.

artist. In 1840, one of the first histories of needlework, attributed at the time to the Countess of Wilton, praised Linwood and lamented the devalorization of her work. The book's actual author, Elizabeth Stone, qualified Linwood's needlepaintings as the "triumph of modern art in needlework" and stated that her exhibition used to be "one of the lions of London."[115] Raymond Williams mentions that today's use of the term "art" and "artist" was not fully established until the nineteenth century, at which time the distinction between "artist" and "artisan" was strengthened and popularized.[116] Artisan was associated with "skilled manual work," without intellectual, imaginative or creative purpose. This qualification of the artisan, along with that of the scientist, created more room for the specialization of the artist within a social and economic division of labour, leading to the eventual autonomization of the field of culture in terms of art for art's sake.[117] By the nineteenth century, the conscious and conventional association of creativity with art and thought was something that could in some measure be used to downgrade the kinds of practices that, like Linwood's needlepaintings, were associated with skillful production as well as women's domestic production. Throughout the nineteenth century, machine automation was developed at every turn to downgrade the power and the costs of various skilled trades. Despite dramatic social and economic upheavals, the influence of the artisan was doggedly replaced by the overarching influence of science and engineering. Although it falls somewhat outside the scope of this study, it is worth mentioning that the increased division of labour associated with

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[115] Elizabeth Stone, *A History of Needlework*, attributed to the Countess of Wilton (London: Henry Colburn, 1840), 395.
[116] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 40-1.
[117] Williams, *Keywords*, 40-1.

industrial capitalism not only adversely affected women and the working class, but the very idea of bourgeois freedom was greatly altered as this once revolutionary class became "evolutionary," turning by the late nineteenth century into a sclerotic social Darwinism that justified the new forms of imperialism brought about by finance capitalism. It is not surprising then that women's emancipation would ultimately be bound up with the fate of proletarian resistance, trade unionism and social legislation.

In this chapter I have examined how the emergence of the Royal Academy greatly shaped emerging notions of the artist as an independent professional. In the early decades of the RA, trades such as that of the engraver were excluded from the definition of professional members in part because they were based on the practice of copying. Clearly, much of the value of a needlepainting came from its ability to deceive the eye of the beholder and lead them to the awestruck realization that the image they were looking at was made in thread. In the next chapter I look at practices of copying in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. We find here that values that were ostensibly anathema to modern art were, paradoxically, part and parcel of its development and culture. As a key element in the production and valorization of needlepainting, copying is essential to appreciate as a foundation to the practice and popularization of Berlin work.

CHAPTER 3: IMITATION AND INNOVATION IN LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

In order to appreciate the development of Berlin work as well as needlepainting it is necessary to examine the status of the copy and the practice of copying in late eighteenth-century Great Britain. This chapter draws on the research of Maxine Berg, John Brewer and Viccy Coltman to consider the ways in which copying was connected to various economic, industrial, philosophical and cultural transformations.[1] While these authors do not discuss either needlepainting or Berlin work, the interpretive action of genealogy recognizes that practices of copying are crucial to both but in ways that are differentially articulated across time. It is important to consider that the facts of copying are constituent aspects of the status of needlepoint as a submerged knowledge but that this was not always the case, in particular, as copying was in the late eighteenth-century a feature of both culture and manufacture, creating complex links between art and industry. The bourgeois and industrial revolutions created new systems of art that led away from Court culture towards a broader network of urban culture, which, through trade patterns, linked Great Britain to a global system. At this time, matters of culture and taste were being established and debated by artists, collectors, connoisseurs, and entrepreneurs. The scientific revolution had by and large distinguished liberal arts from scientific knowledge and mechanical arts. This divide between art and science was confounded, however, by the needs of expanding markets and economies, and the entrepreneurial enthusiasm of the

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[1] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1997); Maxine Berg, "From Imitation to Invention: Creating Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Economic History Review* LV:1 (2002): 1-30; Viccy Coltman, "Representation, Replication and Collecting in Charles Townley's Late Eighteenth-Century Library," *Art History* 29:2 (April 2006): 304-24.

middle class. Debates in the sphere of art were closely associated with the fields of economics and manufacturing. A key aspect of cultural innovation was the imitation of foreign goods. Copies in this context were associated with the idea of imitation and were believed to improve on originals through technological refinements, generating a sense of pride and achievement for its producer. The study of the practice of copying, therefore, sheds new light on needlepainting and by extension on Berlin work. Through an appreciation of the status of the copy in the eighteenth century, we can understand how it is that Linwood's imitations of well-known paintings in thread could be valued as highly skilled and learned innovations that represented not only professionalism but civilized sociability, knowledge and refinement.

Between Art and Industry

Before addressing the question of copying as it applied to art and science, it is useful to consider the ways in which these areas of practice were conceived and distinguished. I draw here on Raymond Williams' research on the sociology of language to consider how the distinction between artist and artisan was altered by the advent of industry, which led to a more dramatic distinction between art, understood as a liberal discipline, and science, understood as a mechanical discipline.[2] According to Williams, the word "art" has been used in the English language since at least the thirteenth century. Its original meaning, which continues to the present, refers to any kind of skill. Until the end of the seventeenth century, "art" was applied indiscriminately to fields as various as mathematics and medicine. In the medieval university, the "liberal" arts included

[2] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. The use of the term "artist" emerged in the sixteenth century to describe the skilled person or practitioner of the seven muses: history, poetry, comedy, tragedy, music, dancing, astronomy. Until the end of the sixteenth century "artist" and "artisan" had the same meaning. By the late seventeenth century, however, these terms began to be used in a more specialized application to painting, drawing, engraving and sculpture. Williams notes that the almost exclusive application of "artist" and "artisan" to fine art media was not fully established until the late nineteenth century, well after our period of study in this chapter. The distinction between artist and artisan, however, began to make its appearance at the end of the eighteenth century, precisely at the moment when needlepainting began to be excluded from the category of professional fine art. Williams notes for example that the Royal Academy excluded engravers, now considered "artisans," because their activity represented a form of "skilled manual work" that was without "intellectual," "imaginative" or "creative" purposes.[3] As we have seen in the previous chapter, the development of the professionalization of art was premised on the exclusion of certain practices and in particular on those that were associated with copying. One should not overestimate the application of these academic rules, however, as copying was a common art practice. What we should take account of, nevertheless, is the fact that the fine arts began to be distinguished from scientific products and from skilled manual work. Therefore, while in the late eighteenth century it was possible to use the term "art" as an abstract concept with generally coherent internal principles associated with imagination and creativity, such usage only becomes fixed in the

[3] Williams, *Keywords,* 40-41.

nineteenth century.[4] In this regard, one must not apply the standards of the nineteenth century and its historically specific association of art with imaginative creation to the practice of needlepainting in its context of emergence. One must rather, I would argue, consider the reciprocal interaction of creative notions of art as a skilled practice with emerging ideas about economics as it applied to culture and industry.

According to Eric Hobsbawm, the "industrial revolution marks the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world."[5] Britain was a pioneer of industrialization and was known as the world's workshop, a massive importer and exporter of goods, and an imperialist power that used its navy to implement foreign investments.[6] The industrial revolution inaugurated a shift from production based on manual labour to machine manufacturing. The distribution and trade of textiles and other manufactured goods was facilitated by the system of canals and later, by the invention of railways. Whether one defines this process as a revolution or a gradual transition from agrarian to non-agrarian occupations is largely immaterial as it is obvious that in the second half of the eighteenth century, England experienced an economic and cultural boom like nowhere else.[7]

According to Williams, the meanings of the terms "industry," "mechanical" and "science" varied a great deal in the eighteenth century.[8] As early as the sixteenth century, "industry" could be used to mean diligence and it could also be used to contrast with the

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[4] Williams, *Keywords,* 40-41.
[5] Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1968), 13.
[6] Hobsbawm, 13.
[7] Maxine Berg and Pat Hudson, "Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution," *Economic History Review* XLV:1 (1992): 24-50.
[8] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 40-1.

products of nature. In the eighteenth century, "industry" was used to mean a workhouse, which brings together the idea of forced and useful work. This meaning developed into the term "industrialism" in order to refer to a "new order of society based on organized mechanical production."[9] By the nineteenth century, industry referred to technical changes in production and to the "industrial revolution" as the means to institute new social relations based on industrial change.[10] The term "mechanical" was traditionally used to describe non-agricultural work, including artful and craft work. It was used to define routine, unthinking activity. The idea of the machine as an apparatus of interrelated moving parts belongs to the eighteenth century and acquires complexity as it comes to represent the shift from "a body of theory about specific practices" to "general theories about the laws of motion."[11] The latter notion of mechanics was associated with materialism, a term distinct from the religious and spiritual, or, on the other hand, as a way of describing everything in the universe as the product of mechanical forces. Machines, Williams states, were seen to work on their own, replacing human labour, and suggested the idea of the universe without a God or divine directing force. The last term, "science," was generally used to refer to something that is known theoretically as opposed to something that is known through conviction or commitment and conscience.[12] Before the nineteenth century, science was used interchangeably with art to describe a particular body of knowledge. As art came to be distinguished from skill, science began to have connotations that differed from art insofar as science related to demonstrative meaning achieved through regular or methodical observations. In this way, science was

[9] Williams, *Keywords*, 166.
[10] Williams, *Keywords*, 166.
[11] Williams, *Keywords*, 202.
[12] Williams, *Keywords*, 277.

seen to be "mechanical" rather than "liberal." According to Williams, the distinction between experience and experiment signifies important changes leading to experience being related to subjective knowledge as opposed to objective knowledge concerning the external world. Theory applied to "feeling" and the "inner life," in contrast, became associated with "art" and not science.[13] By the early nineteenth century, the distinctions grew deeper. "Science" now referred to the methods of the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology) and "art" a means to serve the abstract ideal of beauty. It goes without saying that these categories were never neatly separated and William Turner, for example, could speak of the "science of art," and John Constable of the "science of painting."[14] In the following I look at practices of copying and consider how they could be said to create a picture of needlepainting that relates to both art and science. It should be clear to the reader that qualities that applied to needlepainting and to Berlin work in their contexts of emergence would later be reversed and used as reasons to discredit these practices. Art and science, liberal and mechanical, skilled and creative, are therefore not fixed terms that can be applied to either of these practices in any definitive way but should be seen to have operated differentially at different times and in different places as systems of classification that are permeable, and as systems of power and knowledge that produce variable histories.

Science and the Tasteful Person

In *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, John

[13] Williams, *Keywords*, 278.
[14] Turner cited in James Hamilton, *Fields of Influence* (Birmingham: University of Birmigham Press, 2001), xiii; Constable in his *Fourth Lecture at the Royal Institution*, cited in Williams, *Keywords*, 279.

Brewer discusses how a new system of art, with new institutions and new concepts of taste came into being. According to Brewer, eighteenth-century urbanization was central to cultural transformations, and high culture "moved out of the narrow confines of the court and into [the] diverse spaces" of the city and of London in particular.[15] Eighteenth-century British culture was in the process of being shaped by the deliberate efforts of its artists, who were attempting to define aesthetic criteria and standards of taste in their fields. Philosophers like Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke and David Hume sought to distinguish the emotions of taste from sexual gratification and acquisitiveness, "to separate those things that were tasteful from the ordinary and useful objects of everyday life."[16] According to Brewer, our contemporary notion of "high art" is an eighteenth-century invention. Prior to this, knowledge had been based on medieval systems dating back to Aristotle and on the *studia humanitas* of the Renaissance. European enlightenment changed the way that thinkers approached knowledge. It separated the arts from the sciences and questioned whether the modern world was equal or superior to the ancient, resulting in the continuation of the "Battle of the Books," in which Ancients were compared to Moderns.[17] The eighteenth century also witnesses the development of a new social composition for the arts. There was a larger public for the arts acting as patrons and audiences, which meant that art was no longer exclusive to aristocrats, courtiers and clerics. Many new forms of art and objects like books and pamphlets, prints and engravings, circulated, were discussed and debated and traded in public auctions. Academies, art societies, shops and auction houses all contributed to the

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[15] Brewer cited in David Keymer, "Review of *The Pleasures of the Imagination*," in *Library Journal* (1997), accessed February 29, 2008.
[16] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xv.
[17] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xvi.

interregional and national distribution of art. New and expanded forms of employment were also created by the market, encouraging the work of printers, publishers, engravers, printsellers, and art dealers.[18] These developments characterized the transformation of British culture in this period.

As the arts became more urban they also became more commercial. There developed the belief that "[t]aste in the arts was... a sign of refinement, cultivation and politeness" and that these qualities were nurtured in the cities.[19] The new system developed a new tasteful person: the "sociable man." Tastefulness meant refinement and learnedness. A person could display these qualities through knowledge about the arts and through polite conversation.[20] The tasteful person created a new community, open to a wider public. In polite society, refinement was judged to be more important than social rank, allowing for a new mingling of people from different economic situations. The poor, however, did not have the education or the means to participate. Though women were excluded from some important clubs and associations, those possessing the required virtues did participate in this new society primarily through the institution of the salon and the drawing room. While not everyone benefited from this new prosperity or participated in the new refined culture, by the 1780s those who did form the audience for the arts represented 25 percent of the population. They were moderately prosperous property-

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[18] In the late eighteenth century, London became the center of the European print trade and print culture was a significant feature of the culture of the copy. The influx of the print image at that time contributed dramatically to cultural transformations. For more on this, see John Brewer's chapter on "Borrowing, Copying and Collecting" in *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 427-489.

[19] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xviii.

[20] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xviii.

holders who were able to enjoy books, prints, musical evenings and the theatre, what Adam Smith referred to as "the decencies of life."[21]

Along with these cultural changes came the belief that the fine arts were a leading feature of modern commercial society. Philosophers and political economists like Hume and Smith argued that modern civilization had moved away from barbarism through the cooperation and interdependence created by economic exchange. This in turn was believed to have brought refinement to manners and propagated better taste. In turn, the level of civilization that a nation could boast of was measured by the state of its artistic achievements.[22] Using a nation's civility and politeness as a standard brought about new forms of questioning in the ways that the Ancients could be contrasted to the Moderns. While some continued to defend the superiority of the Ancients, the pointlessness of following the ancient ways in a modern world became part of what was debated. Emulation rather than imitation was proposed by some as the key to progress.[23] Another outcome was the marginalization of traditions. While greater numbers of people had access to the high arts, local, traditional or folk arts were marginalized and thought of as primitive. By the end of the eighteenth-century, leading artists and intellectuals began to question this marginalization and erasure of popular forms of expression. These thinkers distinguished between less refined but rich, popular and local expressions and what they had come to think of as international, cultured and conforming taste, which they believed had developed through over-refinement into hypocrisy.[24] The erudite culturati of the period thus began to attack urban sophistication through various means, celebrating

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[21] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xxvii.
[22] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xix-xx.
[23] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xx.
[24] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xxi.

natural feeling and the simplicities of rural life. The paradox of this liberal humanist ideology was that one had to be civilized in order to properly appreciate the virtues of the popular and the primitive. Either way, one was certain to think of oneself as modern.

As a multitude of pleasures thrived in the cities, the distinct virtues of the imagination, theorized to be proper to art, became harder to maintain as such. Technical and commercial development was believed to have eroded the line between art and other forms of expression.[25] Europe increasingly looked to English society as a place in which cultural accomplishment was associated with commercial prosperity. This perception equated modernity with prosperity and liberty, and believed these to have replaced the previous century's religious and political conflicts. A more complex view emerged after the French Revolution, however, when English society was no longer perceived to be exclusively dynamic and progressive, but began to be seen as conservative and hierarchical.[26] In any case, the enlightenment was the main force that changed the way people thought about knowledge. In these changed circumstances, commerce played an important role in the debates among artists, dealers and collectors.

Copying and Luxury Goods

In her essay on the creation of new commodity goods in eighteenth-century Britain, Maxine Berg argues that invention and commerce were major forces in the industrial and manufacturing transformations of modernity. Whereas today technology is narrowly conceived in relation to economic growth, in the eighteenth century, technological invention was as much a matter of reason and imagination as it was about technical

[25] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xxii-xxiii.
[26] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, xxix.

development.[27] When looking at the industrial revolution, technological change is usually explained in terms of process innovation. It has been assumed that serious transformations came from process innovation, which Berg defines as the production of a good of given characteristics at a lower cost. Product innovation, in contrast, occurs when a new product is created or when the quality of an existing product is improved.[28] Berg's insight is to recognize product innovation as a key aspect of eighteenth-century invention and an important feature of manufacturing growth and productivity change. As part of this, she proposes that domestic commodities and luxury goods – and here, we could include needlepaintings – may have been as important as the steam engine as indicators of eighteenth-century invention and ingenuity.[29] A significant feature of economic change at this time was the international trade of exotic foreign goods and luxury items. Britain's protective response to this trade was import-substitution and the creation of new commodities. Luxury items, initially identified with imports, were to become the subject of invention.[30] As the demand for luxury items grew, they came to be thought of simply as consumer goods, diversified according to tastes and produced outside the personal household.

According to Berg, product innovation, related to the demand for luxury goods, considerably expanded manufacturing. She argues that product innovation is best understood in terms of the eighteenth-century conception of "imitation." At this time, imitation was thought of as "an evocation of objects in other forms," as opposed to

[27] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 1.
[28] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 4.
[29] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 6.
[30] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 1-3.

"slavish copying."[31] Imitations could well surpass the original in terms of inventiveness, value and rarity.[32] Berg points out that the "imitation of a particular principle observed in earlier or alien technologies, combined with an innovator's own knowledge, received a certain pride of place in generating substitution and imitation."[33] Good imitators were believed to be good innovators. Early in the century, economic policy makers and thinkers made the replacement of imported luxury goods with domestic productions a priority. The newly advantageous place for Britain in the international economy that was developed in the eighteenth century was greatly supported by invention and product innovation. The key to product innovation was therefore imitation. According to Kim Sloan, the idea of the copy in the eighteenth century retained its Latin root, *copia*, which means abundance. Copies were thus associated with richness and plenitude, worthy of a gentle and noble art.[34]

In her essay on representation, replication and collecting in the library of Charles Towneley, Viccy Coltman mentions Johann Zoffany's painting *Charles Towneley's Library at 7 Park Street, Westminster* (c.1781-98).[35] The painting allows us to consider how a wealthy man's library was a space in which cultural education was based on the study and possession of copies. In the history of art, Zoffany's painting has been thought of as an illustration of the reception of antiquity in late eighteenth-century Britain and also as pictorial shorthand for neoclassicism and the taste for the antique. Coltman's essay suggests that copying, or replication, was not only a means of artistic practice but a

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[31] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 3.
[32] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 3.
[33] Berg, "From Imitation to Invention," 7.
[34] Kim Sloan, *"A Noble Art": Amateur Artists and Drawing Masters, c1600-1800* (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 42.
[35] Coltman, "Representation," 304-24.

veritable cultural dynamic, an index of the precarious link between antiquity and modernity.

3.1 Johann Zoffany, *Charles Towneley's Library at 7 Park Street, Westminster* (a.k.a. *Charles Towneley in his Sculpture Gallery*), c.1781-98. Oil on canvas, 123.5 x 99.5 cm.

The painting of Towneley's library represents a collection of ancient sculptures. Coltman points out that an engraving of a bronze statue is seen on the library floor and gives evidence of "the duplication and dissemination of antiquities in print."[36] She argues that because he positioned the print of a bronze sculpture next to one of Towneley's marble sculptures of the same subject, Zoffany introduces the idea that enlightenment scholars were aware that the ancients had themselves copied masterpieces of ancient sculpture. This doubling of the materials and mechanics of artistic replication allow Zoffany to compare his eighteenth-century contemporaries to the ancients, and moreover, to illustrate the popular theme that art imitates life. Coltman argues that replication implies the malleability of the original, which is signaled by the fact that Zoffany adjusted the placement of some of the sculptures and adjusted their size to have all of them appear within the Towneley library. New acquisitions were also added to the painting at a later date.

Zoffany's painting is but one document that signals the importance of copying in enlightenment culture. The archaeological discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 1738 and 1748 had led to a growing interest in antiquities in England and the collection of antiquities was considered a new modern obsession. Collections typically included Roman marble copies of Greek bronzes and were often discussed within an exclusively masculine context of learned conversation.[37] Such conversations were relevant to the institutionalization of the fine arts in the late eighteenth century. Towneley installed his collection of ancient sculptures in London and made it accessible to artists. Judging from the number of artists who copied the works in Towneley's collection, Coltman proposes

[36] Coltman, "Representation," 314.
[37] Coltman, "Representation," 306.

that it acted as an "unofficial counterpoint to the English arts establishment represented by the Royal Academy."[38] Such collections, it was hoped, would raise the standards of British painting. Notwithstanding that the love of antiquities was associated with standards of excellence and cultural refinement, it was considered, moreover, essential to possess specimens and to make them available for study. Zoffany's painting displays his ability to copy the originals and match their creators.

The work of another artist from the period allows us to bridge the gap between the kind of replication culture noticed in the Zoffany/Towneley case and that of product innovation. George Stubbs was a member and one-time president of the Society of Arts of Great Britain and later a member of the Royal Academy, which demanded exclusive membership. Although Stubbs, like Hogarth, was a self-taught artist and scorned the copying that took place in the academy schools, preferring instead to work from nature, he did copy his own paintings in enamel, and these are worth considering here. These copies of paintings were the result of his working on the chemistry of enamel pigments and his development of an exceptional working relationship with Joshua Wedgwood, who strove to meet Stubbs' demands rather than maintain his own usual process in which the artist was expected to surrender his work to Wedgwood's materials and production methods.[39] In 1782 Stubbs presented enamel paintings to the RA but they were not well received. Robin Emmerson, in his study of the Wedgwood oven books, does not suggest that the reason for this was due to the fact that the enamels reproduced Stubbs's earlier paintings, but the fact that the RA did not appreciate the medium of enamel, which was

[38] Coltman, "Representation," 307.
[39] Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends Who Made the Future* (London: Farber and Farber, 2003), 330.

associated with small-scale anonymous work on pottery, porcelain and metal objects like snuff boxes.[40] The smooth finish of enamels was also out of step with the fashion for vigorous and visible brushstrokes.[41] As well, in contrast to the brown varnish of oil paintings, the bright colours of Stubbs's enamels may have appeared garish to his Academy colleagues. A contemporary reviewer made it clear that the enamels were not welcome, stating that he was happy to find that the "rage for enamel had so prudently subsided," and that Stubbs "will never experience the disgrace which must be ever attendant on mounting his hobby horse of enamel portrait painting."[42]

3.2 George Stubbs, *Haycarting*, 1795. Enamel on Wedgwood earthenware plaque, 77 x 105 cm.

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[40] Robin Emmerson, "Stubbs and Wedgwood: New Evidence from the Oven Books," *Apollo* 150:450 (August 1999): 50-2. For an article that mentions Zoffany's reproduction of masterworks in miniature, which were in fact shown at the RA, see David H. Solkin, "'This Great Man of Genius': The Royal Academy at Somerset House, 1780-1836," in *Art On the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibition at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 1-8.
[41] Basil Taylor, *Stubbs* (London: Phaidon, 1971), 17.
[42] A reviewer in *Gentleman's Magazine* (1791) cited in Emmerson, "Stubbs and Wedgwood," 52.

3.3 George Stubbs, *Haymakers*, 1785. Oil on canvas, 89.5 x 135.3 cm.

3.4 George Stubbs, *Haymakers*, 1795. Enamel on Wedgwood biscuit earthenware plaque, 77 x 105 cm.

It is significant that in this statement, not only is the medium of enamel being derided, but so is Stubbs's product innovation. Enamel, as Stubbs wanted to use it, was difficult

and required a good deal of experimentation to allow for the firing of different colours at different temperatures. The tablets were almost impossible to make, with warping and cracking posing a serious difficulty. It was also a costly venture and Wedgwood eventually abandoned the project. Regardless of the setbacks, Stubbs acted as an innovator in an emerging technique to produce an indestructible and very stable image. These kinds of experimentation were not uncommon at the time. Joshua Reynolds, for example, experimented with mixtures of varnish and turpentine in an attempt to match the colours of the Venetian school but was left with bad results. Some of his images showed visible deterioration in only a few months. Some of Stubbs' paintings also met with bad results as a consequence of technical experimentation. In order to gain luminosity he blended pine resin, beeswax, nondrying oils and fats, and as a consequence many of his canvases flaked beyond repair. He eventually thought that greater luminosity could be achieved with enamels.[43] Emmerson suggests that Stubbs, by working with the difficult medium of enamel, may have been trying to distract from his identity as a horse painter. While a high level of skill was required and may have been noted at the time, Stubbs did not believe that working in a difficult medium associated with trinkets was a reasonable deterrent. He was much more likely invested in the possibility of exploiting enamel's durability for the purpose of creating new products. The few enamel paintings that Stubbs produced on Wedgwood pottery remain artistic and technological high points of their age.[44]

[43] Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, 331.
[44] Emmerson, "Stubbs and Wedgwood," 55.

3.5 George Stubbs, *A Tyger*, c.1763-8. Oil on canvas, 100.9 x 124.5 cm. This work, which is in the Marlborough collection, Blenheim Palace, was copied by Stubbs on two more occasions.

3.6 John Dixon, *A Tigress (engraving after George Stubbs)*, 1772. Mezzotint, 48 x 58.4 cm.

3.7 Unknown maker (possibly by Mary Linwood), *After George Stubbs' painting of a great tiger*, c.1789-1800. Embroidered wool worked from an engraving in about 1800.

Having considered some of the ways in which the new culture of eighteenth-century art was closely connected to the commercial economy, we are better able to appreciate the conditions of possibility and the space of transition between needlepainting and Berlin work. It is important to indicate that to date no one has attempted to explain how the culture of copying is significant to either of these. When in the last chapter I present a history of the existing discourse surrounding Berlin work, the reader will be aware that the authors mentioned do not present the subject in the ways that I am suggesting here. These new possibilities of analysis provide an indication of the active construction of

new knowledge that is made possible by interdisciplinary research. One such possibility is the view of Berlin work as a kind of product innovation. Product innovation provides a complex rationale for how it is that a copy could be considered socially, culturally and economically valuable. Needlepainting, we could also suggest, was innovative and depended in part for its social value and significance on a culture of copying. As discussed in the previous chapter, the appearance of painted brushstrokes in thread was a novelty that was greatly admired in the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. As mentioned also, the accuracy of the copy, its ability to emulate the source, was deemed a value in itself. This is in part explained by the relative significance of printmaking in this era. Engravings of popular and well-known artworks were widely circulated and were frequently the same size as the originals. Although engravings were sometimes used as patterns it is difficult to know if needlepainters like Linwood made use of them in the copying process. The three works pictured above represent a painting by Stubbs, an engraved copy by John Dixon, and a needlepainting copy that was most likely made by Linwood. The three works refer to a cultural context in which, as part of the study of art and antiquity, collectors would commission reproductions of originals. As with Pliny's myth of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, original works were to copies what life was to art, and artifice became a key aspect of aesthetic theory in the neoclassical eighteenth century, competing with skill as a measure of value. Artifice was associated with imagination and the powers of the intellect, a power it should be said, of dominion over nature. The concern for originality at the time, which increased in the romantic period, could be said to be derived from the spread of practices of replication. Copying from great works of antiquity could also be seen not only as a way of learning but as a

measure of one's sophistication and erudition. Copying was part and parcel of talking about art, of engaging in discussion and debate. Copying as a learned activity, and by extension the copies themselves, became associated with marks of distinction and cultural superiority. The ability to copy in a skillful and innovative manner was therefore highly valued.

3.8 Silk work. Embroidered picture on painted silk, worked in feather stitch, based on a 1782 print by Franceso Bartolozzi made after Angelica Kauffman's *Fame at the Tomb of Shakespeare (after Angelica Kauffman)*, c.1782-1800, 44.5 x 39.5 x cm. The print was published in black and white and the embroiderer chose the colours of the stitches – in this case, with a grisaille treatment of the figure. The subject was a fashionable expression of romantic sorrow.

Before concluding it is worth mentioning printwork and silkwork, types of eighteenth-century product innovation that were also based on methods of copying. Both of these are in fact important intermediaries between needlepainting and Berlin work. For a silkwork, the embroiderer would purchase a white ground made of silk with an image drawn on it by an artist. The faces and skies were typically painted in advance and the buyer would embroider over the image with a variety of stitches. Silkworks were typically inspired by engravings of well-known neoclassical and romantic paintings. According to Levey:

> Most were bought ready-drawn on their pale taffeta grounds and the finer details – the faces, the hands and the softly-clouded skies – were painted with water colours; only the landscape and figures were embroidered with coloured silks or fine wool, mainly in long-and-short, satin and stem stitches. Sometimes attempts at three-dimensional realism were made.[45]

Besides silkwork, Levey also mentions printwork:

> More demanding on the patience and skill of the embroideress was another type of early nineteenth century embroidery, known as print work, in which detailed copies of line and stipple engravings were worked on white or cream taffeta. In the most ambitious of these, almost every line of the original engraving was reproduced in silks shaded from black to grey and cream; in others the more subtle effects were achieved with the help of sepia coloured washes.[46]

Unlike Berlin work, the stitching in a silkwork is not regulated by the weave of the canvas, and unlike needlepainting, the embroiderer does not attempt to simulate the look of brushwork. Printwork, however, is like needlepainting insofar as it attempts to reproduce the look of the source material. Both methods were by and large displaced by Berlin work. They nevertheless share with both needlepainting and Berlin work some key characteristics: an obsession with learning through copies, prints and engravings, and

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[45] Santina M. Levey, *Discovering Embroidery of the Nineteenth Century* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, [1971] 1977), 25.
[46] Levey, *Discovering Embroidery of the Nineteenth Century*, 25.

a shared pictorial and thematic vocabulary. As an intermediary between needlepainting and Berlin work, silk and printwork offered the maker the chance to realize an image in thread. The practice of copying an image brought it within a private space and it is therefore not surprising that the themes of printwork and silkwork were often pastoral romances, scenes from novels, and memorial pictures.[47] Unlike Berlin work, which promised and yielded fairly systematic results, the practices of silk and printwork displayed the unique skills of the embroider.

3.9 Unknown maker, *Mourning Shakespeare*, c. 1782-1840. Framed silkwork embroidery, based on Franceso Bartolozzi's 1782 engraving after Angelica Kauffman's *Fame at the Tomb of Shakespeare* (c. 1772), 40.6 x 35.5 cm.

[47] See Margaret Swain, *Embroidered Georgian Pictures* (Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications, 1994).

3.10 Unknown maker, *Mourning Shakespeare*, c. 1800-1825. English silkwork embroidery, based on Franceso Bartolozzi's 1782 engraving after Angelica Kauffman's *Fame at the Tomb of Shakespeare* (c. 1772), emboidery 22.86 x 15.24 cm. Presented in eglomise frame with oval window, within a later giltwood frame.

3.11 Charles Theodore Middleton, *Ruins of Rome, Engraved for Middleton's Complete System of Geography*, c.1778. Engraving, 22.5 x 35.7 cm, plate 19 x 29 cm. Numbered titles for the illustrated elements are included in the bottom legend.

3.12 Unknown maker, *Ruins of Rome*, c.1779-1820. Framed printwork, embroidered silk, frame 27.1 x 35 cm, visible 19.5 x 27.5 cm. The printwork accurately copies the print, matching size and content. The people and animals, however, are absent.

In terms of the overall concerns of this project, it is important to point out that copying famous works in thread is a significant feature of Berlin work as it developed in the early nineteenth century. Berlin work, unlike needlepainting, advances the potential of

embroidery for product innovation. As the namesake indicates, it is in Germany and not in England that the manufacturing of patterns and materials for canvas work, which became known as "Berlin work," emerged as a viable commercial venture. Before I discuss this, however, it is important to examine a key feature of Berlin work practice. As the scientific revolution caused a split between the liberal arts and the mechanical arts, it also caused a number of significant overlaps, as seen in the case of Stubbs' enamels. As part of this process, the taste for mechanized and manufactured luxury products grew and complemented the development of modern art. In the next chapter I explore the development of an industrial aesthetic. Thinking of Berlin work as the kind of product innovation that emphasized bourgeois industrial values not only allows us to consider what made it popular in its day, it also allows us to see it differently from the way it was thought of in later periods. What a genealogy reveals is that Berlin work is not a stable referent. Its original contexts and frames of reference also change according to later historical contexts. From the point of view of the present, and from the point of view of this thesis as a work in process, there is no conclusion to the conjoining of the "loose threads" of the past, only an ongoing series of re-evaluations that figure here in terms of an effective history of needlepoint.

CHAPTER 4: TOWARDS AN INDUSTRIAL AESTHETIC

This chapter briefly examines the shift from the eighteenth century to that of the nineteenth in terms of the interaction between machine invention and the systematization of image production. According to James Hamilton, eighteenth-century art and science were two halves of a unity which evolved into contradictory cultures as the nineteenth century progressed.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the popularity of Berlin work was due not only to those cultural aspects of needlepainting and copying that have been elaborated in previous chapters, but also to the development of an "industrial aesthetic" that derived from enlightenment ideals about technical innovation as an index of economic and social progress. The following describes the development of mechanical painting, commercial guidebooks as well as the automation of woven patterns in the textile industry. As I will demonstrate, the art of Berlin work was associated with scientific innovation in the context of industrialization. However, such inventiveness, as it became associated with machines, began to be questioned in the nineteenth century. This marked a shift away from neoclassical bourgeois optimism towards romantic critique and the rise of socialism.[2] The essence of the "industrial aesthetic," as I call it, is

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[1] James Hamilton, "Preface," in Hamilton, ed. *Fields of Influence: Conjunctions of Artists and Scientists 1815-1860* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2001), xiii. For a study the exchange between art and industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Francis D. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, ed. Arthur Elton (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, [1947] 1968).

[2] Without a doubt, the most notable critique of bourgeois political economy came from Karl Marx. For the period of study discussed in this chapter, Marx noted the massive increase in the productive forces due to the development of industry. In his review of Proudhon, Marx explained that wealth and productivity, insofar as it was connected to private accumulation, the wage system and anarchic competition, was also associated with increased poverty, a phenomenon that allowed Marx to associate productivity with

not merely the presence of science in art, or of images of industry, but of art's mass commercialization. There is no question that artistic practices were popularized in the nineteenth century, a process that was associated with mechanization and the cultural appreciation of the potentials made possible by industry. The different forms of work, from skilled handicraft to scientific automation, vied and mingled in the development of Berlin work. Berlin work introduced the values of scientific mechanization into domestic embroidery. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to bring to our understanding of Berlin work values and qualities that have hitherto been either overlooked or forgotten. Some of those same values, as it happens, could be applied to needlepainting, and so this is where I begin.

4.1 Henry Singleton, *Inside of a Gentleman's Study, with Portraits*, 1794. Oil on canvas, 19 x 33 cm.

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class antagonism. See Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the "Philosophy of Poverty" by M. Proudhon* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, [1847] 1978).

The Proximity of Artistic and Scientific Invention

A painting by Henry Singleton from 1794 depicts Mary Linwood seated and at work on what is likely one of her needlepaintings (fig. 4.1). She is in the company of Mrs Lorraine-Smith, the Third Viscount Maynard, Charles Lorraine-Smith, Henry Singleton, and a house servant. Curiously, to Linwood's right, the Viscount Maynard is making use of some kind of optical device in order to observe the painting being made by Mrs Lorraine-Smith. John Steegman refers to this device as a stereoscope, but this is an impossibility since the stereoscope had not yet been invented.[3] Whatever it is, it gives an indication of the use of scientific devices within a community of artists that included both professionals and amateurs. Although the painter Singleton was never included as a Royal Academy painter, one year before the making of this image, he was commissioned to paint a group portrait of RA members, thereby showing his association with the professionalization of art. The painting with Linwood was known as a conversation piece, a genre invented by William Hogarth. This fact is significant insofar as Hogarth was also very much concerned with the professionalization of the arts. This group portrait captures many of the distinctive aspects of a transformative moment in English culture. What I would emphasize here, first, is the mixture of learned and amateur practices in the context of an enlightened group of peers, and secondly, the fact that the image provides an indication of the association of artistic practice with that of scientific invention and innovation. The image of Linwood at work in the same space as a colleague who is making use of a hand-held optical device contains, in the form of a

[3] John Steegman, *A Survey of Portraits in Welsh Houses, Volume I: Houses in North Wales* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1957), 172.

social assemblage of devices and practices, the constituent elements of Berlin work as a new model of image reproduction. This model is much more developed in the case of Berlin work and only exists in a nascent state in the context of needlepainting.

Another context in which we find the intellectual mingling of aesthetics and science in late eighteenth-century England is that of the Lunar Society. The Lunar Society was but one of countless clubs that existed in that period. Its members used to meet on the closest Monday to a full moon, to make night travel possible.[4] The Lunar Men was an informal group of likeminded people who were interested in both art and science. Among their achievements, Jenny Uglow lists the building of new factories, canals, steam engines, and the discovery of new gases, minerals and medicines.[5] They were also interested in the production of objects of beauty, luxury goods and poetry. For example, they worked with member Josiah Wedgwood on various kinds of objects that could be manufactured, such as vases with classical motifs. Matthew Bolton, who was mentioned in a previous chapter, was also a member of the Society.[6] In 1762 he opened his Soho Works factory in Handsworth, just outside of Birmingham. There he produced high quality metal works. What is noteworthy about Soho Works is that it replaced the traditional system of putting out – in which a businessman uses different workshops in different locations in the process of manufacturing – with a centralized concept of manufacturing in which the various processes take place under one roof. At that time, it was the largest factory in the

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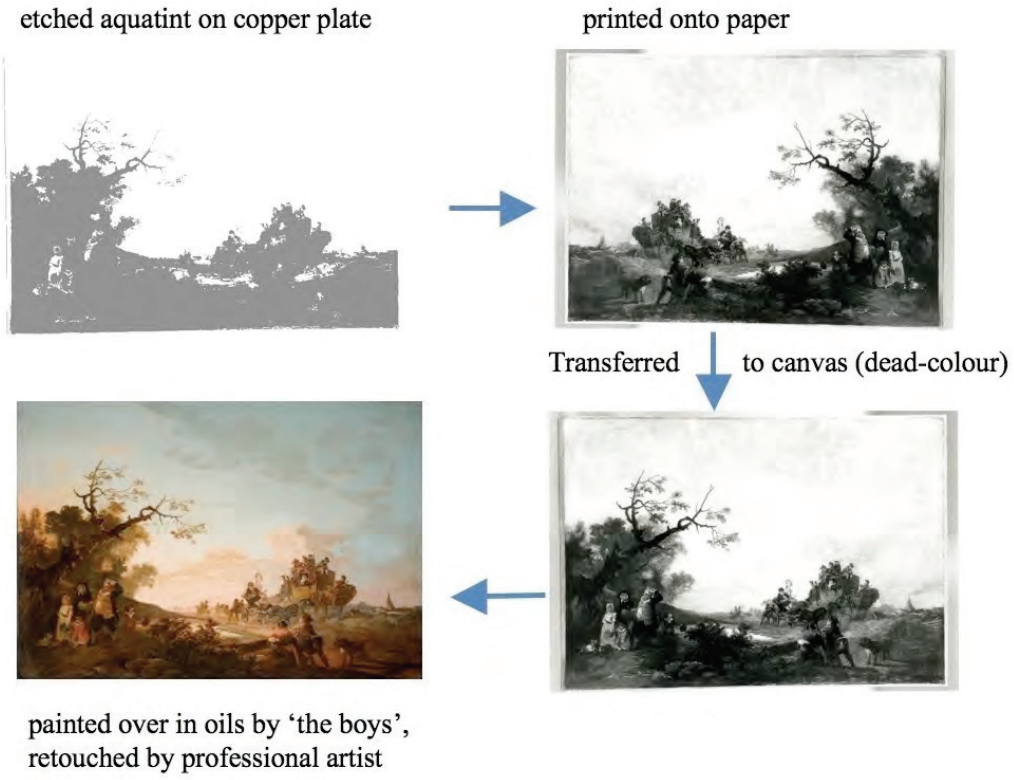
[4] See Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends Who Made the Future, 1730-1810* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).
[5] Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, 3.
[6] Boulton was also a good friend of Mary Linwood. The education of young women was among the Lunar Men's concerns. The fact that Boulton sent his daughter to study needlework with Linwood was very significant in terms of this group's vision of a modern society.

world. In 1775, Boulton teamed up with James Watt to build and to market Watt's steam pump. He also developed a new coining press that produced coins that were more difficult to counterfeit. In a world of expanding wage labour, this machine facilitated the systematization of currency. Boulton, like Wedgwood, worked in the production of various luxury goods, in particular high quality service ware made of silver. In 1776 he built Soho house, which became the regular meeting place of the Lunar Society. The various activities of this group of bourgeois entrepreneurs, professionals and amateurs, gives an indication of the close links between the arts and sciences at this time and helps to explain the historical context in which needlepainting was transformed into Berlin work.



4.2 Mechanical Painting Process, from Barbara Fogarty, *Matthew Boulton and Francis Eginton's Mechanical Paintings*.

Among the innovations fostered by Boutlon, the invention of mechanical painting stands out as particularly germane to our discussion of an industrial aesthetic. This invention is attributed to Boulton's collaborator Francis Eginton, an artisan who worked in the decorative arts section of Boutlon's factory. At the time of their invention, mechanical paintings were known as mechanical pictures or polygraphs. These were made by copying a painting onto a printing plate. The resulting prints were then hand-painted by trained workers who filled in the colours and reproduced the painting. After this, a professional painter oversaw the last details and finish. The print, on paper or canvas, was then varnished. According to Barbara Fogarty, a polygraph would have been produced in four stages with a different person working on each of these.[7] Boulton was concerned with the quality of the copy, requiring that it be as high in standard as the original. Boulton's contemporaries, in fact, felt that he came quite close to his ambition; according to *Chambers's Journal*, the painter Sir William Beechey was concerned that artists would be ruined "if so cheap a method of producing pictures were generally known."[8] The article claims that this was ultimately the reason given for the eventual suppression of mechanical painting. Fogarty suggests instead that Boulton stopped making them because the process was too costly.

Like Berlin works, mechanical paintings added to the culture of copying in terms of product innovation. Whereas Stubbs' enamels and Linwood's needlepaintings are each

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[7] Lecture delivered by Barbara Fogarty, "Boulton and Eginton's Mechanical Painting: Production and Consumption, 1777-1781," presented at the conference *Where Genius and the Arts Preside: Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactury, 1809-2009*, University of Birmingham, July 4, 2009. See also Barbara Fogarty, *Matthew Boulton and Francis Eginton's Mechanical Paintings: Production and Consumption 1777-1781* (MA Philosophy, University of Birmingham, 2010).

[8] From "Photographs in the Last Century," in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature: Science and Arts* (London, 1864): 498.

of them unique copies, mechanical paintings and Berlin works are unique multiples. The person who makes them is not entirely "visible" in the work and so the skill of the maker is displaced. Unlike Berlin work, the finish of the mechanical painting is carried out by a semi-recognized artist. As "original copies," mechanical paintings could be ordered in different sizes, providing reproductions of work by such artists as Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West, Joseph Wright of Derby and Angelica Kauffman. The surest way to know that these were not the original is the fact that they were a reverse image of the known paintings. Nevertheless, they had a painterly finish and as such could easily be mistaken for a painting, understood in the conventional sense of a unique work made by a unique individual. Mechanical paintings are like Berlin work insofar as they treat copying as a matter of invention. Both of them also apply a division of labour to the making of artworks. What we today might have some difficulty appreciating is the fact that a mechanical painting could have been considered equal or superior to the original insofar as it makes use of ingenious industrial devices. Unlike Berlin work, which is completed in the home with the "free labour" of its maker, mechanical paintings incur the entire cost of production. While Boulton's invention was too expensive to be successful, it nevertheless gives evidence of the ways in which notions of progress and invention could link science and culture.

Guidebooks and the Making of the Modern Amateur

Mechanical paintings represent a specific instance of product innovation. They were available for purchase as luxury objects and were part of a broader trend towards an industrial age division of the constitutive phases involved in the production of a finished artwork. Perhaps the most obvious instance of this tendency towards a systematization of

production is that of commercial guidebooks. Guidebooks offer us an important key to understanding the cultural shift from the eighteenth century idea of the elite amateur to that of the nineteenth century "modern" amateur, which comes closer to our contemporary understanding of the non-professional and non-skilled practitioner. Whereas amateur in the eighteenth century sense implies an independently wealthy and highly skilled practitioner who does not rely on the sale of work, as did professional artists, the nineteenth-century amateur was a new category made possible by the growing level of technical and mechanical innovation and the development of means that replaced traditional art instruction and materials with the idea of practice as the systematic transfer of information from one medium to another. I refer to this new social type as the "modern amateur." While the classical amateur looked down on the professional artist as a common worker, the modern amateur emulated the newly created status of the artist. Guidebooks are emblematic of a broad range of methods and techniques used to created visual images that were devised in this transitional period. They are industrial age tools that mediated the separate spheres of the professional artist and the modern amateur.

The oldest surviving pattern books for embroidery date back to the early seventeenth century. At this time such books used line drawings and grids to aid the embroiderer size and transfer printed designs to canvas. Although they were oriented towards the embroidery of embellishments and not pictorial works, they are nevertheless early instances of the basic idea of a guidebook that aids the practitioner. Examples of such early patterns books are John Taylor's *The Needle's Excellency* (1631) and Richard Shorleyker's *The Schole-House for the Needle* (1632). These books expect that the users will exercise their "proper" and "industrious" skills in the making of the finished product.

More than a century later, Augustin Heckel published his *Bowles's Drawing Book for Ladies; or Complete Florist: being An Extensive and Curious Collection of the Most Beautiful Flowers, All drawn after Nature by A. Heckle. With a short Introduction to Drawing, and Directions for Mixing and Using of Colours. Also Several Proper and Early Examples. The Whole adapted for the Improvement of Ladies in Needlework*. The book was printed in London in 1785 by Carington Bowles. The previous seventeenth-century examples presume that the embroiderers already have the requisite skills. Heckle's book, in contrast, is designed to improve the skills of the user. It assures the user that the skills of an outside group of learned professionals have provided the information that will become useful and, as such, brings into play a division of labour and skills. As well, it offers an assortment of trade knowledge that construes artmaking as a leisure activity: drawing, embroidery, and painting. A few decades later, this emphasis on instruction will have become the key feature of guidebooks. An early nineteenth-century example gives an idea of the transformation of the guidebook from that of a pattern book to be used by a skilled artist to that of a guidebook for the modern amateur user. The book in question is titled *A Series of Progressive Lessons, Intended to Elucidate the Art of Landscape Painting in Watercolours*, published by T. Clay of London in 1811. The book is remarkable in particular for its inclusion of coloured boxes in the written description of how to draw and paint a watercolour landscape. These boxes act as samples that are isolated from the model image and that instruct the user on what colours to use and where to apply them. The whole involves a complex process in which a finished image is abstracted first into a line drawing and then into steps for applying washes and colours. Before starting out, the user would have had to buy separately a

number of materials required to carry out these instructions: specific tints in the form of paint cakes, saucers, a delf palette, brushes and paper. The book is addressed to the "lovers of the art of painting and watercolour" and promises that "simplicity" will give "real assistance" to the user and allow them to overcome "apparently insurmountable difficulties."[9] It thus pretends to make the work of professional artists available to beginners, referred to as "young adventurers." It promises to make available to users the knowledge that was once limited to guilds and academies, offering a democratization through simplification and systematization. The instructions warn the user that some skill is nevertheless required in handling the materials. Regardless, most of the aesthetic decisions have already been determined and so the original that the book's users will make by themselves is something of a copy, or a study. What is required of them is time, labour and mechanical precision. Users, who must be willing and able to follow the instructions, are supplied with information that renders interpretation relatively unnecessary. The book concludes:

> It will be observed, the subjects have encreased progressively in intricacy, and in force of colour, also, that the learner has been expected to study, in the process, all the particulars as they have ascended; for being dependent on each other no link of the chain should be lost. Unless this has been the case it is hardly possible the observations can have produced the effect intended.[10]

This novel form of painting watercolours via the use of a guidebook was in practical terms less a means to earn an art education than it was a method of technical reproduction. As with product innovation in general, the manufacturing of a high quality product is more important than the acquisition of skill, which becomes superfluous.

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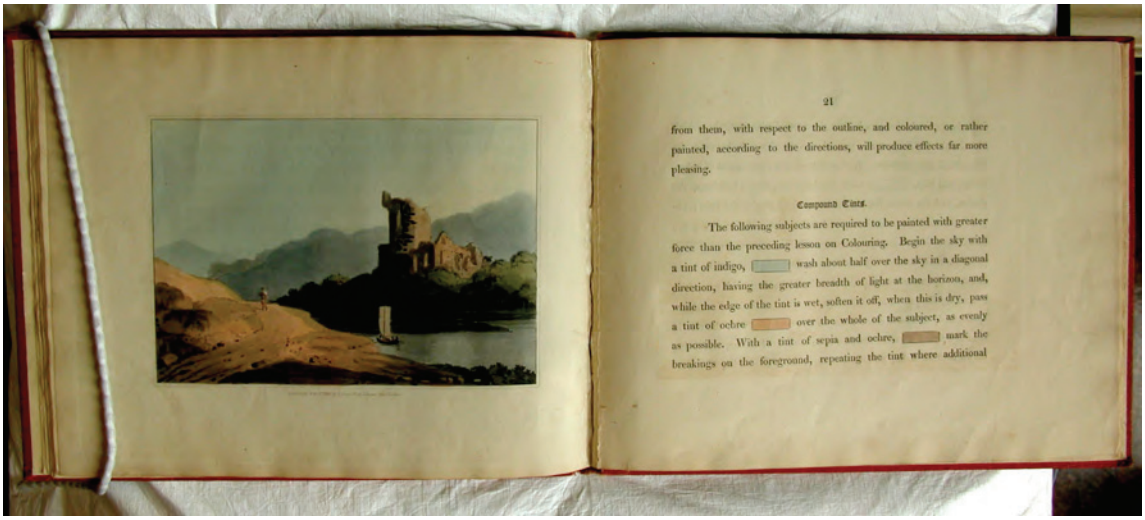
[9] *A Series of Progressive Lessons, Intended to Elucidate the Art of Landscape Painting in Watercolour* (London: Ludgate, 1811), 3-4. Later editions of this text are attributed to the painter David Cox.
[10] *A Series of Progressive Lessons*, 30.

Various editions of the book were attributed to the painter David Cox, a member of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours.[11] What is notable, however, is that the hand-coloured plates in these books were painted by people other than Cox. This fact alone provided some evidence that anyone can learn. The manufacturing of Cox's guidebooks also leads me to presume that the printers were employing a small army of hand painters. The promise that the user could become this skilled anonymous painter meant that the guidebook, as a proxy for Cox, offered to substitute effectively for a paid art instructor. Within the confines of a domestic household, a middle-class family of modest means could purchase access to the learned practices of the wealthy, who, in contrast, could afford to directly employ an artist instructor.



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from them, with respect to the outline, and coloured, or rather painted, according to the directions, will produce effects far more pleasing.

Compound Tints.

The following subjects are required to be painted with greater force than the preceding lesson on Colouring. Begin the sky with a tint of indigo, wash about half over the sky in a diagonal direction, having the greater breadth of light at the horizon, and, while the edge of the tint is wet, soften it off, when this is dry, pass a tint of ochre over the whole of the subject, as evenly as possible. With a tint of sepia and ochre, mark the breakings on the foreground, repeating the tint where additional

4.3 Pages from Cox's *A Series of Progressive Lessons*, 2nd edition, 1812.

The paradox of early nineteenth-century guidebooks is that they were designed to market ready access to the means to create a quality product, something that hitherto

[11] See for example David Cox, *A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effects in Watercolour, From the First Rudiments to the Finished Picture* (London: J.Tyler, 1814) and David Cox, *Progressive Lessons on Landscape, for Young Beginners* (London: S. and J. Fuller, 1816).

required a good deal of knowledge and skill. One of the points that I wish to make here is that guidebooks began to mediate the worlds of the newly professionalized artist and that of the modern amateur. Berlin work came into existence at a moment when the distinctions between skilled and unskilled were increasingly volatile and open to transformations. A this time, a diversity of media and techniques were brought under the guidance of publications, as seen, for instance, in the Reverend Thomas Town's *The Art of Painting on Velvet*, which makes accessible the "exertion of genius" and the "display of taste."[12] Despite its promise of achievement, the book cautions that proficiency will not be obtained all at once; one must move respectably through life and not consider that one will advance without effort. It recommends to the user to "place that which is worthy acquirement or imitation in full view, – discover your deficiencies by comparison, correct them, and be resolved to succeed."[13] It gives Angelica Kauffmann and Mary Linwood as examples of success and industriousness:

> We should never have admired the work of Angelica Kauffman, if that justly celebrated artist, on her first failure, had laid aside the pencil; nor would the public have been gratified by the exhibitions of Miss Linwood, had not the taste of that lady been equalled by her perseverance. In the performances of the former, creative genius glows on the canvas; in the latter, the arts of imitation captivate the eye, and Gainsborough's pencil receives additional honour by the needle of Linwood. Indeed the history of the church, or country, and the arts, record, that female piety, patriotism, genious, and perseverance, are equal to the most noble actions, highest pursuits, and greatest attainments.[14]

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[12] Thomas Town, *The Art of Painting on Velvet Without the use of Spirit Colours – divested of difficulty and obscurity, shewing that Water Colours, by the aid of T.Towne's Alumina and Instructions, Are adequate to every purpose of Velvet Painting. Also, Directions in the choice of Materials, Subjects, Colours, Compounding of Tints, & c.&c. with Coloured Engravings elucidating the subject in its progressive stages from the Outline to the Finished Drawing* (Cambridge: R. Ackermann, 1811), 4.
[13] Town, *The Art of Painting on Velvet*, 5-6.
[14] Town, *The Art of Painting on Velvet*, 6.

This mediation of the worlds of "ancient" masters and "modern" amateurs is evident in the title of a guidebook from 1817: *The Art of Painting in Oil, rendered familiar to every capacity: Extracted from the Work of the Most Eminent Masters of the Italian, Flemish, and English Schools.*[15] These texts are testaments to the fact that at the end of the eighteenth century, the modern specialization of media and the privileging of painting is not to be assumed or taken as a *fait accompli*. An 1818 title, for instance, reads: *The Artist's Assistant in Drawing, Perspective, Etching, Engraving, Metzotinto Scraping, Painting on Glass, in Crayon, in Water-Colours, and on Silks and Satins. Containing the easiest and most comprehensive Rules For the Attainment of those truly useful and Polite Arts. Methodically Digested, And adapted to the Capacities of young beginners. Illustrated with Suitable examples, engraved on copper.*[16] Only a few decades later, the books become more specialized in terms of medium and technique, as seen in the case of *A Guide to Fancy Needlework and Embroidery*, from 1842, and *The Lady's Album of Fancy Work; consisting of Novel, Elegant and Useful Designs in Knitting, Netting, Crochet, and Embroidery, with Clear and Explicit Directions for Working the Patterns*.[17] These texts are not only witness to the specialization of medium but to industrial

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[15] *The Art of Painting in Oil, rendered familiar to every capacity: Extracted from the Work of the Most Eminent Masters of the Italian, Flemish, and English Schools* (London: James White & Richard Holmes Laurie, 1817).

[16] *The Artist's Assistant in Drawing, Perspective, Etching, Engraving, Metzotinto Scraping, Painting on Glass, in Crayon, in Water-Colours, and on Silks and Satins. Containing the easiest and most comprehensive Rules For the Attainment of those truly useful and Polite Arts. Methodically Digested, And adapted to the Capacities of young beginners. Illustrated with Suitable examples, engraved on copper* (London: James Whittle and Richard Holmes Laurie, 1818).

[17] *A Guide to Fancy Needlework and Embroidery* (London: C. Michell, 1842); *The Lady's Album of Fancy Work; consisting of Novel, Elegant and Useful Designs in Knitting, Netting, Crochet, and Embroidery, with Clear and Explicit Directions for Working the Patterns*, 2dn edition (London: Grant and Griffith, [1842] 1849).

systematization. Such guidebooks for modern amateurism, I argue, were associated with scientific development insofar as they allowed various arts to be circumscribed to relatively autonomous systems of production.

In addition to providing users with instructions on how to learn without the intermediary training of a master artist, many books were narrowly oriented towards imparting knowledge to trained artists on technical information concerning their craft. These books could be used by either professionals or amateurs. For instance, *The Painter's Companion, or, A Treatise on Colours* presents itself as useful for Ladies and Gentlemen who wish to amuse themselves with learning how to make oil and watercolour paints.[18] *The Art of Drawing in Perspective* provides technical information on the traditional techniques of the draughtsman.[19] To give a general view of the development of the guidebook form, we can trace three major steps. The first locates the guidebook well within an enlightenment context. For example, *The School of Wisdom; or Repository of the Most Valuable curiosities of Art and Nature*, published in 1776, combines within its pages technical information with philosophical reflection.[20] The first chapter is titled "A Survey of Man, with sublime Reflections on his most noble Part of the Soul," followed by chapters on "Astronomy, Oratory, Morality, and Politenesss," "A Review of the Creation, viz. Birds, Beasts, Fishes, and Insects," "Drawing, Painting in

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[18] *The Painter's Companion, or, A Treatise on Colours: Shewing how to Make the Several Sorts From their Proper Ingredients* (London: James Whittle and Richard Holmes Laurie, 1815).
[19] *The Art of Drawing in Perspective: Wherein the Doctrine of Perspective is clearly and concisely treated of Upon Geometrical Principles: and a Mechanical method of Perspective and Designing, invented for the benefit of those who are Strangers to Mathematics* (London: James Whittle and Richard Holmes Laurie, 1817).
[20] *The School of Wisdom; or Repository of the Most Valuable curiosities of Art and Nature* (London: Gainsborough, 1776).

Water and Oil Colour, Gilding, Etching, Engraving, Painting upon Glass, and Bronzing," "Dying Linen, Woolen, Silk, Leather, &c" and "The whole Art of Pyrotechny or Fire-works." This heterogeneous compilation for the eighteenth-century amateur, oriented towards the rational elevation of minds, contrasts with the second category, which consists of books from the early nineteenth century that offer a far more pragmatic, scientific approach, minus all of the philosophical reflections associated with the liberal arts. One example, similar to those mentioned above, is titled *The Art of Painting in Water-Colours, &c. Exemplified in Landscapes, Flowers, &c. Together with Instructions for Painting on Glass, and in Crayons: Explaining in a full and familiar Manner. With Particular Directions for Preparing the Colours, Agreeably to the practice of the most eminent masters*.[21] In contrast to the previous title, this guidebook assumes a user with less skill and knowledge. In this case, it not only instructs the reader on how to make colours, but also on how to apply them, for instance, by using brown and ochre, heightened with massicot or brown-ochre and white, etc, to paint the hair of young women and children. The last category consists of guidebooks that are produced for a modern amateur that has come into being as a social type. A good example of this is John Cawse's 1840 book *The Art of Painting Portraits*.[22] The first page of the book depicts an artist's palette, an image that allows users to imagine themselves in the role of

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[21] *The Art of Painting in Water-Colours, &c. Exemplified in Landscapes, Flowers, &c. Together with Instructions for Painting on Glass, and in Crayons: Explaining in a full and familiar Manner. With Particular Directions for Preparing the Colours, Agreeably to the practice of the most eminent masters* (London: James Whittle and Richard Holmes Laurie, 1818).

[22] John Cawse, *The Art of Painting Portraits, Landscapes, animals, Draperies, Satins, etc. In oil colours: Practically Explained by Coloured Plates: with an appendix on cleaning and restoring ancient paintings on panel or canvas* (London: Rudolph Ackerman, 1840).

the artist. The simplicity of the technical instructions are partly due to the fact that by this time the artist could buy manufactured paints in cakes or in tubes. The author states that the book would be most useful for students and wishes that he had had access to such a book when he studied at the Royal Academy. He mentions that philosophical and theoretical observations have been avoided and that all explanations are of a practical nature only. This practical approach separates the realm of mechanical arts from that of liberal arts, providing an easy, rudimentary introduction to painting. Each re-issue of the book, between 1829 and 1840, improves on itself, presenting as near the form of assistance required so that the user "never fails." Artmaking is referred to by Cawse as a "system" that amateurs, with the aid of scientifically improved guidebooks, can learn by themselves.

Guidebooks provide us with a good sense of the mindset and cultural reference points of the practitioner of Berlin work. The growth of the market for prefabricated paints and other artists' materials in the early nineteenth century was accompanied by the marketing of guidebooks to assist the amateur.[23] If eighteenth-century artists had done a great deal to distinguish art practice as a liberal profession, the modern amateur sought to appropriate the prestige of art but did so in the context of industrialization. This meant

[23] See Philip Ball, *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Color* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001). Ball's book mentions the manufacturing of watercolours in the 1760s, a fact that allowed for an increased division of labour and a boom in amateur painting. This lucrative market was facilitated by innovations in mechanized milling and in the shift from the use of ground pigments for colours to colours produced through chemical synthesis. The bright colours associated with industrial chemical colours, developed at the end of the eighteenth century, and found in the Berlin work charts as well as in the dyed wools, were important elements of a new "industrial aesthetic" when considered in terms of visual effect. We can note here that synthetic colours are derived from the development of the coal and steel industry. See Esther Leslie, *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry* (Middlesex: Reaktion Books, 2005), 7.

that art could be associated with labour and industriousness as well as new technical information and developments.

The Jacquard Loom and Its Curious Commemoration

Scientific innovation in the late eighteenth century was increasingly oriented towards the invention of machines, especially as capitalist industrialists sought ways to increase productivity through the reduction of the required labour time needed in manufacturing processes. Machinery was the outcome of a scientific division of labour. In *The Machinery Question and the Making of Political Economy*, Maxine Berg argues that for enlightenment intellectuals, machine innovation was an "indicator of economic expansion" which, it was believed, would "contribute to the general 'improvement' of society."[24] The machine was received favourably and contributed to the period's belief in economic progress. The development of industrial machinery was particularly acute in the English textile industry. In 1733 John Kay invented the flying shuttle. This represented the first decisive step in the automation of the loom, reducing the number of workers required, diminishing irregularities, and increasing the speed of production. A string of textile mechanization inventions followed, including Weisenthall's embroidery machine (1755), Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny (1764), Arkwright's spinning mill (1769), Compton's Spinning Mule (1779) and Cartwright's power loom (1785). Most importantly, in France in 1801, Joseph Marie Jacquard made improvements to the Vaucanson loom and in 1804-5 invented the attachment to the loom that would grant it his name. The attachment, which is positioned on top of the loom, is an "automatic,

[24] Maxine Berg, *The Machinery Question and the Making of Political Economy, 1815-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1.

selective shedding device" that makes use of punched cards and is operated by a treadle, which is controlled by the weaver.[25] The punch card represents one throw of the shuttle and transfers a pattern by affecting the lifting of the warp threads. The cards are made by transferring the pattern from the designer's weave draft and can be used to repeat a pattern. While Jacquard's loom was not an English invention it dramatically affected the French and English textile industries alike.[26]

During the eighteenth century, the term for automation was "self-acting." While automation as we know it did not exist, from the appearance of the first factory automation was the ideal and each technical innovation strove towards this end. In the midst of rapid innovation, the "self-acting" Jacquard loom stands out as a technological exception. In 1804, Jacquard patented his loom, which built upon the previous inventions of Bouchon, Falcon and De Vaucanson.[27] This machine refined the technology and solved the practical problems of the earlier designs by pioneering the automatic application of punch cards in the loom control system. This meant that the loom could now continuously "feed itself" the information needed for each row of weaving in a design pattern.[28] The loom became operational after 1810, and became industrially viable in England in the 1830s. Because the cards were expensive to produce, the

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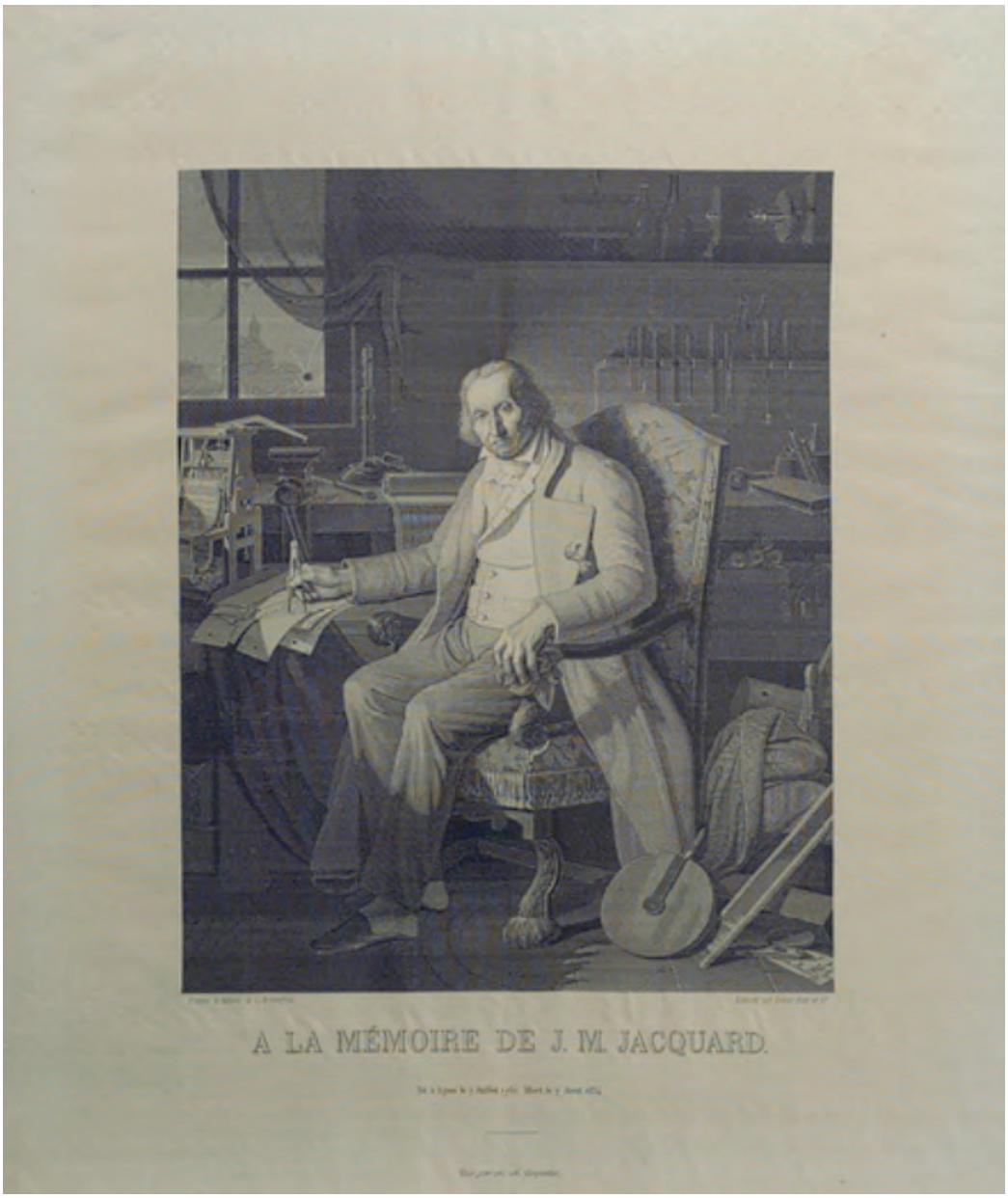
[25] "Jacquard loom," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online: Academic Edition*. Consulted January 21, 2009, http://search.eb.com/eb/article_60772.
[26] It is worth noting that during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, France's economy was largely based on the marketing of hand-made luxury goods and woven silk was its largest export commodity. Single-handedly and almost overnight, the Jacquard loom brought extraordinary changes to the French silk industry by automating the production of patterned textiles. See James Essinger, *Jacquard's Web: How a Hand-loom Led to the Birth of the Information Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[27] Walter English, *The Textile Industry: An Account of the Early Invention of Spinning, Weaving, and Knitting Machines* (London: Longman's, 1969).
[28] Essinger, *Jacquard's Web*, 36.

Jacquard loom became economical only when heavily patterned textiles were mass produced.



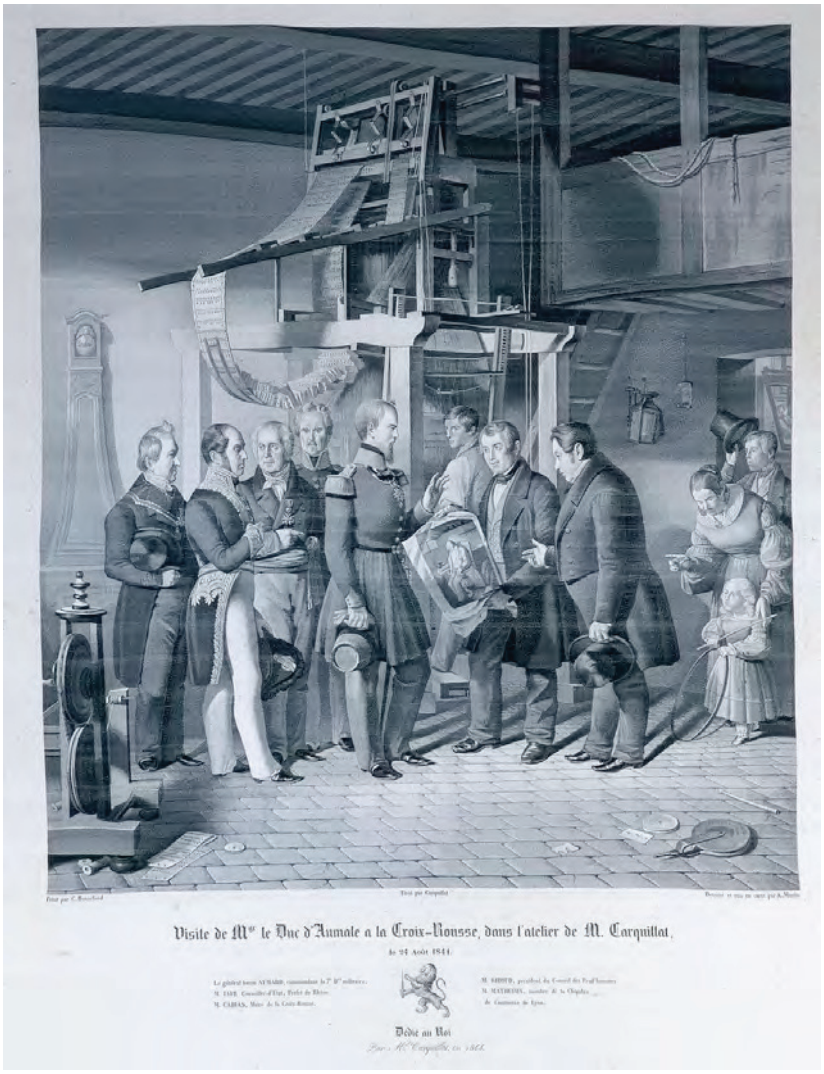
4.4 Woven portrait of Joseph Marie Jacquard. Silk, 60.3 x 50.8 cm. Woven in 1839 by Michel-Marie Carquillat of the Didier Petit company in Lyon, France. Based on an oil painting by Jean-Claude Bonnefond. For this non-commercially produced image, 24,000 punch card were used. The most sophisticated commercial fabric used 4000 cards. A small model of Jacquard's 'automatic' punch card control machine can be seen to the left of Jacquard in this picture.

Before the Jacquard loom, Berlin work introduced industrial features into domestic embroidery. Why would the domestic realm be concerned with such industrialization? The simple answer to this is the fact that it is in the realm of textiles especially that we find the most intense development of machine automation. While one might think that the realms of industry and of domestic amateur practices were worlds apart, my concept of an "industrial aesthetic" as a key feature of the popularity of Berlin work depends on an awareness of the closeness of these two realms in the early nineteenth century. Berlin work, as a modern amateur practice, shared with industrial machinery the concerns and values of the bourgeois middle class. From here it is possible to see how some of the same concerns that we find in Berlin work products were also visible in the products of the loom: systematization, the elimination of error, a rationalized division of labour, predictability of outcome, and increased productivity. In these two cases – Berlin work and the Jacquard loom – all of these features were applied to the logic of producing images that conformed to the rules of illusionistic painting.

The Jacquard loom was the first automatic machine that made it possible to weave elaborate images into silk. The potentials implied by the Jacquard loom's use of punch cards did not escape the scientist, philosopher, engineer, mathematician and writer Charles Babbage. In his development of a calculating machine in the 1830s, Babbage adapted Jacquard's "punch-card programming" and applied it to mathematical calculation, contributing to the birth of information technology.[29] In 1840, with the assistance of a French colleague, Babbage purchased a woven portrait of Jacquard (fig 4.4). When asked by Prince Albert about the importance of the portrait, Babbage is said

[29] See Charles Babbage, *Charles Babbage and His Calculating Machines* (London: The Science Museum, 1991).

to have replied: “It will greatly assist in explaining the nature of my calculating machine.”[30] However, in his own writing, Babbage referred to the portrait as a “beautiful work of art” and recounts how it was often mistaken for an engraving.[31]



4.5 M. Carquillat, *A visit by the Duke D’Aumale in 1841 to the Croix Rousse studio of the master weaver M. Carquillat*, 1844. This image, like the Jacquard portrait, is a woven picture. It depicts the Duke receiving a copy of the woven Jacquard portrait. The image shows the loom that made the textile along with the punch cards lined up on a chain. Lyons Museum of Textiles.

[30] Essinger, *Jacquard’s Web*, 4.
[31] Charles Babbage, *Passages from the Life of a Philosopher* (London: Dawson of Pall Mall, [1864] 1968), 169-70.

The manufacturing of punch cards for weaving machines in some ways resembles the production of Berlin charts, which were to be copied almost mechanically by the makers of pictorial Berlin work embroideries. Like punch cards, the Berlin charts were very expensive. The space of overlap between the two describes a machine-age aesthetic that lent Berlin work a particular aura. We could say the same thing for methods of copying. As the methods of reproduction were mechanized, the value of the effort involved in copying was gradually assigned to the machine, and less so to its human manipulator. Not surprisingly, the scientific use of photography competed in the late nineteenth century with its aesthetic manipulation. In the early century, however, the copy was not considered a cheap representation, as we have seen. The pleasure that Charles Babbage could take in the fact that his mechanically woven portrait of Jacquard could be mistaken for an etching indicates a great deal of interaction and equivalence between the realms of art, science, innovation, mechanization and copying. If we consider Babbage's calculating machine as a device that eliminates human error by replacing human skill and mental activity with mechanical computation, then we have come some way in appreciating the general context in which Berlin work charts flourished.[32]

During the nineteenth century, the machine was increasingly connected with mass discontent due to its link with the economic uncertainty that came from unemployment amongst those whose labour it had displaced.[33] For people living through the industrial revolution, Berg says, "[t]he machine was not an impersonal achievement... it was an

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[32] See for instance Doron Swade, "'It will not slice a pineapple': Babbage, Miracles and Machines," in *Cultural Babbage: Technology, Time and Invention*, ed. Francis Spufford and Jenny Uglow (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 34-51.
[33] For more on this subject, see for instance Kevin Binfield, ed. *Writings of the Luddites* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

issue."[34] Machinery affected relations between employers and employees, and was perceived to be a matter of theoretical and ideological dispute. As the machine question stimulated intellectual disciplines, the field of political economy broke from wider political and social concerns to focus on the social impact of the new techniques of production.[35] We will find that a similar fate befell the production and reception of Berlin work. What emerged in the context of scientific and cultural enlightenment was gradually commercialized and, in the case of Berlin work, shifted from being an exclusive practice to that of a popular cultural form. In the next chapter I trace the trajectory of Berlin work across two hundred years through an examination of what little literature there is on the subject. By looking at how different authors have treated Berlin work, it is possible to recognize how context is illuminating and how there is not one Berlin work but many.

In this and the previous chapter, we have examined copying and systematization as newly articulated social and cultural phenomena that differentially inform our understanding of both needlepainting and Berlin work. While a historicist account would emphasize these phenomena in terms of causality, creating direct bridges between needlepainting and Berlin work through primary sources that provide proof of this, genealogy reveals that historical sources have instead overlooked these factors. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the issues of copying as a learned activity and systematization as a process that mediates copying through mechanization, are all but unstated in early nineteenth-century accounts of embroidery. It is ironic therefore that

[34] Berg, *The Machinery Question*, 9.
[35] Berg, *The Machinery Question*, 10.

these issues – copying and systematization – will later in the century appear as reasons to discredit the practices of needlepainting and Berlin work. A history of errors gives priority to such overlooked differences and deviations. With this and the previous chapter, I have provided material that will allow us to appreciate that it is not merely needlepoint itself as a gendered craft practice that has been submerged throughout history, but the more specific aspects of pictorial Berlin work – again, copying and systematization – which help to account for the success and popularity of Berlin work in the early nineteenth century. These factors, while perhaps so obvious to early nineteenth-century commentators as to go unmentioned, or only obliquely so, become flashpoints in later decades and reasons to devalue the practice altogether. In this regard, the values that adhered to needlepainting and Berlin work functioned something like ideologies of progress and cultural value that only became apparent once they had been replaced and took on the appearance of errors or accidents – in some cases, as evidence of bad taste. In the next chapter, I trace the development of Berlin work through a systematic study of written sources. Berlin work is thereby treated not as a known entity, but as an object of discourse that becomes visible and knowable within shifting social, economic and cultural formations. I trace its different meanings all the way to the present in which my own work and research becomes effective in the understanding of the history of Berlin work as a history of forces. Copying and systematization will be revealed to have been not only aspects of continuity between needlepainting and Berlin work but also as aspects of discontinuity in a broader history of pictorial embroidery.

CHAPTER 5: PICTORIAL BERLIN WORK AND ITS RECEPTION

When one examines contemporary accounts of needlepoint, it is almost impossible to know that the success of pictorial Berlin work emerged from efforts to bring an industrial-age type of efficiency to bourgeois domestic embroidery. The introduction of Berlin work charts and the systematization of pictorial embroidery was one of the means through which early nineteenth-century middle-class women participated in modern industrial culture. The two previous chapters have described the ways in which needlepainting and Berlin work could be said to have combined aspects of liberal cultural refinement with scientific systematization and product innovation. However, when the researcher examines the contemporary literature on the history of needlepoint, one does not find this information. There is next to no trace of this history of enlightenment, science and industry in the accounts of Berlin work that are in circulation today. Take, for example, Raffaella Serena's *Berlin Work: Samplers & Embroidery of the Nineteenth Century*, a luxurious "coffee table" book first presented in Italian in 1991 and co-published by DMC, one of the world's largest manufacturers of needlework threads.[1] Although two decades old, Serena's book is the most recent publication on the history of Berlin work. More than half of this book is dedicated to a colourful presentation of Berlin work patterns. Most of these are decorative patterns, floral patterns and patterns with children and animals that would have been used to decorate rugs, slippers, cushions, tea cozies and other furnishings. Serena's selection of patterns fits with the notion of embroidery as embellishment as opposed to embroidery as the support for an image.

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[1] Raffaella Serena, *Berlin Work: Samplers & Embroidery of the Nineteenth Century* (South Kearney, NJ/Berkeley: DMC/Lacis, 1996).

This treatment completely eclipses those aspects of Berlin work that are associated with needlepainting. It prevents the possibility of thinking about Berlin work in relation to painting and the fine arts more generally, and it also presents the history of Berlin work as a unified medium of practice, which tells us a great deal about how it is remembered today. Such patterns, however, are more typical of how Berlin work is remembered than what it was at its inception. One likely explanation for the absence of pictorial samples is the fact that needleworks that are based on paintings have through the years come to be perceived rather like kitsch products. Serena's rigorous focus on samplers, borders and decorative patterns associates Berlin work with authenticity and utility. It is not only oriented to a practitioner who already knows how to make needlepoint, but to one who thinks of it in terms of "traditional" middle-class taste.[2] It is invested in the somewhat Victorian idea of needlework practice as part of the maintenance of standards of taste. What is most interesting is that in order to separate such ostensibly "traditional" uses of needlepoint from image-oriented kitsch uses, the history that it conveys expunges precisely the most modern aspects of Berlin work's past.

The fact that needlepoint practices have been tremendously popular in the last two hundred years has not prevented them from escaping serious study. This concluding chapter presents a detailed look at Berlin work through an examination of its written reception. I begin with recent embroidery histories and from there move to the first accounts of needlework in the mid-nineteenth century and then trace sources through to

[2] Most contemporary books on needlepoint are somewhat cheaper versions of this focus on Berlin work as "embellishment" and include usable patterns. Whereas Serena's book presents Victorian patterns, most of the books on the market today present new patterns produced by the author. See for example, Beth Russell, *Beth Russell's Traditional Needlepoint* (Pleasantville, New York: Reader's Digest, 1992).

the present. While criticism of Berlin work existed in the mid-nineteenth century, in the early twentieth century significant attempts were made to thoroughly dismiss Berlin work as an unfortunate development and to altogether write it out of embroidery history. Such altered fortunes relate to changing definitions of art, to different systems of evaluation coming into practice, and to broad social transformations. By the mid-twentieth century, Berlin work was considered a craft hobby and largely separated from embroidery histories.[3] It is only in the 1960s, in the context of the development of social history methodologies, that Berlin work begins to be treated once again as an object worthy of study. By the 1990s, however, this social history approach had all but vanished. Contemporary accounts like Serena's, unfortunately, very often perpetuate a deficit in conceptualization, reducing historically variable motivations and intentions to the singularity of the medium, understood in terms of a fetishization of techniques and materials that presumes an unchanged "tradition." It is possible, in contrast, to trace this process of transformation by looking at the last two hundred years of writing on this type of embroidery. By studying this literature, we can see how discourses on needlepoint have been shaped over time. As I perform this task in this chapter, the reader will understand that one does not discover Berlin work as a coherent object, but rather as a site that has been subjected to contradictory forces, variable institutional determinations and numerous paradigm shifts. By also presenting the main issues involved within a historical sequence I am better able to emphasize the historicity of these ideas. Issues such as the value of copying, or the typology of the modern amateur, appear differently at different times. They are not simply repeated in different historical locations, but each

[3] See for example Raymond F. and Marguerite W. Yates, *Early American Crafts and Hobbies* (New York: Wilfred Funk, 1954).

time appear themselves as altogether different historical constellations and so what we find are ideas and issues that are themselves dispersed and that have often contradictory meanings and valences.

5.1 Hand-painted Berlin work chart by the firm of L.W. Wittich, Berlin, Germany, c.1810-1830, 35.7 x 29.1 cm.

5.2 Detail of hand-painted Berlin work chart by the firm of L.W. Wittich

Contemporary Embroidery Histories

Berlin work is by and large perceived as a form of embroidery. Embroidery is part of the broader category of textile production and consists in the embellishment of fabric or some other material with, in most cases, needle and thread.[4] A prominent text on the history of Western embroidery, from the ancient and medieval periods to the present, is

[4] Santina Levey provides a useful definition of embroidery: "Embroidery is a term used to describe the methods by which one piece of material is decorated either by simple sewing with coloured threads or, more elaborately, by the application of beads, ribbons or other pieces of fabric. Simple embroidery is of two main types; in the first the stitches follow the outlines of the pattern, taking no account of the weave of the ground material; in the second the stitches are worked over the carefully counted threads of the material and, as a result, the patterns are always less free and have a geometric appearance." Santina M. Levey, *Discovering Embroidery of the Nineteenth Century* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, [1971] 1977), 3.

Pamela Warner's *Embroidery: A History*.[5] The book is introduced as required reading for London's City and Guilds embroidery examination and so may be considered as a canonical history of the practice. In it, Warner situates Berlin work within the context of the history of embroidery and canvaswork. Canvaswork refers to any form of embroidery that makes use of the weave of a textile support in the placement of stitches. It is sometimes referred to as "counted thread" embroidery. The section on Berlin work begins with a mention of discriminatory statements made against it – statements that nevertheless reflect the widespread popularity of Berlin work in the nineteenth century. The surfeit of Berlin work production, made to adorn all manner of textiles and furnishings, is said to originate in Berlin, where the printseller Philipson produced the first hand-coloured charts.[6] The leading publisher of Berlin charts, however, was the artist and engraver Wittich, the husband of Frau Wittich, who in 1810 persuaded him to invest in this new market. Warner then provides a brief history of its spread. She writes:

> The early charts were exported to the whole of Europe, Britain and North America. In 1831, a Mr Wilks opened a warehouse on Regent Street, London, and imported all the requirements for Berlin wool work. The charts were very expensive and after use could be returned to Mr Wilks and part-exchanged for new ones. By 1840 some 14,000 had been published. The charts were first printed in black and white with symbols denoting the various colours. They were then delivered to outworkers who carefully hand-coloured each chart. The early examples show the use of many finely graded colours. By the middle of the nineteenth century many countries were producing designs – England, France, Russia, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. The quality of the designs gradually declined once the magazines were printing them in great number. Printed canvases were produced in the second half of the nineteenth century; an example was shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851.[7]

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[5] Pamela Warner, *Embroidery: A History* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1991).
[6] Warner, *Embroidery*, 147.
[7] Warner, *Embroidery*, 148.

5.3 Hand-painted pictorial Berlin work charts by firm of L.W. Wittich, c.1810-30.

5.4 Pictorial Berlin work canvases, c.1810-40s. The image on the left is by Wittich.

This in essence is the predominant chronology of Berlin work. Warner adds to this historical account some detailed remarks about the kinds of wools that were used. Countries that produced designs also produced wools, which were dyed in natural dyes until 1856, when William Perkins developed and patented aniline dyes, which became known as "gaslight colours."[8] According to Esther Leslie, these first synthetic dyes were produced from the byproducts of coal processes and as such were directly associated in people's imaginations with laboratory science and industry.[9] Warner remarks that by the 1870s the new colours, including purple and magenta, began to be perceived as lacking in good taste and a first phase of traditionalism emerged with Berlin work practitioners turning to the imitation of antique work and antique "faded" colours.[10] At the same time that the reaction against the "non-natural" artificiality of the new colours set in, Berlin work as a whole also began to decline and by the 1880s, Warner says, it was almost altogether replaced by art needlework, which, unlike canvaswork, did not rely on the regularity of the support for placement of stitches and so represented to Victorians the return of skill to embroidery. This shift towards art needlework is associated by Warner with the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which counterposed the new naturalistic embroidery to that of Berlin work.[11] It is worth noting, however, that Warner's account, and others like it, do not explain this shift in terms of the association of Berlin work with an industrial aesthetic, but simply account for it in terms of "bad taste." For today's embroidery historian, Berlin work represents an instance of bad taste and art

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[8] For a biography of William Perkins, see Simon Garfield, *Mauve: How One Man Invented a Colour that Changed the World* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000).
[9] Esther Leslie, *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry* (Middlesex: Reaktion Books, 2005), 7-8, 76.
[10] Warner, *Embroidery*, 148.
[11] Warner, *Embroidery*, 150.

needlework a return to good taste, but taste in this regard is dissociated from the social conditions in which it is defined. Rather, it is fixed as something that can be accounted for in itself and thereby naturalized.

From the point of view of a privileged art needlework, there is an irregularity in Warner's account. This is the mention of pictorial Berlin work, a feature of Berlin work production that (although Warner does not consider this) has the capacity to link Berlin work with needlepainting and a host of related concerns such as product innovation and the association of copying with learned discourse. Such concerns allow us to look beyond a medium specific embroidery history and to think of Berlin work as emerging in the same conceptual space as modern art and the broader modern culture. As Warner puts it:

> There were two main types of design: pictorial subjects and floral sprays. Pictures were popular throughout the whole century and were often worked in both wool and silk, some examples included beads, metal thread and braid. Many subjects were religious or mythological, particularly during the first half of the century. The drawing was competent. Many examples of the early work are signed and dated. Other subjects reflected the popular paintings of the period, romantic subjects which were given the name *style troubadour*. Scenes from the novels of Sir Walter Scott were often depicted, as were well-known artists like Landseer, whose *Chevy Chase* and *Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time* were much copied. Sometimes the chart-makers took liberties with the artist's work and would 'brighten it up' with colourful skies and vivid green foliage. Many animal studies were worked – dogs and cats on cushions, often royal pets. Even the Prince of Wales as a baby did not escape, and was shown playing on a tartan rug.[12]

Warner's canonical history of embroidery provides us with a typical account of the rise and fall of Berlin work. It does not attempt to account for the misgivings with which it was received in the later nineteenth century and as such, tends to ignore rather than reveal the ties between submerged and official knowledges.

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[12] Warner, *Embroidery*, 148.

Embroidery was never as widely practiced as it was in the form of nineteenth-century Berlin work. In his *Art of Embroidery*, published in 2001 by the Royal School of Needlework and dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (Patron of the School), Lanto Synge mentions that Berlin work displaced almost every other form of embroidery.[13] He provides choice examples from various museum collections, mentioning that by the 1840s "armies of women" were employed in the hand-colouring of Berlin work charts, with some companies employing as many as 1,200 people who earned next to nothing.[14] He mentions various sellers, importers, wool, canvas and design producers, and describes the many forms of needlework that could be made with the patterns: bead work with glass and metal beads or pearls, and plush stitch work for pictures of animals, flowers and birds. Synge reiterates the common view that the soft and natural colouring of the earlier Berlin work was superior to the "hard" and "gaudy" colours produced after the introduction of aniline dyes.[15] Unlike Warner, however, he considers pictorial Berlin work to represent a "more substantial form," one that continued the tradition of imitating "great and popular" paintings, including Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and other Bible stories. In the same breath, he considers that these patterns were "sold and worked without a stitch of originality."[16] He adds that Berlin work design manufacturers reproduced and altered original paintings without permissions and royalties, that is, until a law was passed in 1842. He mentions that among the themes of Berlin work, royal subjects were particularly popular in England.

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[13] Lanto Synge, *Art of Embroidery: History of Style and Technique* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2001).
[14] Synge, *Art of Embroidery*, 262.
[15] Synge, *Art of Embroidery*, 263-5.
[16] Synge, *Art of Embroidery*, 265.

Contemporary embroidery histories like Warner's and Synge's offer only rudimentary accounts of Berlin work and provide very little evidence or analysis of the kinds of subjects that were treated.[17] For someone who wants a more detailed examination of historical examples, one has few options other than embroidery histories that are the result of retrospective exhibitions. A good example of this is Pauline Johnstone's *Three Hundred Years of Embroidery, 1600-1900*, a presentation of works from the Embroiderers' Guild of Great Britain.[18] The catalogue mentions Mary Linwood's needlepainting as a high point of neoclassical embroidery and then acknowledges the prevalence of silkwork among practitioners. A section on Berlin work in Johnstone's catalogue provides some interesting background context for the subjects of pictorial canvases. The Gothic revival of the early nineteenth century was associated with reform movements in the Anglican Church and found cultural expression in the historical novels of Walter Scott and Jane Austen. Landseer's *Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time* is described as the kind of image that could bring a "frisson of horror" to Georgian audiences.[19] A 2000 exhibition at the Peabody Essex Museum provides a North American version of this kind of romantic obsession with the sublime. It includes a large 1852 Berlin work portrait of George Washington based on a 1792 painting by John Trumbull.[20] This entry mentions the fact that nineteenth-century Berlin work was

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[17] A more recent text, which focuses exclusively on Victorian embroidery, offers an equally rudimentary account and unfortunately does little more than maintain the medium specific discourse of the rise and fall of Berlin work. See Kathryn Ledbetter, *Victorian Needlework* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012).
[18] Pauline Johnstone, *Three Hundred Years of Embroidery, 1600-1900* (Netley, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 1986).
[19] Johnstone, *Three Hundred Years of Embroidery*, 86.
[20] Paula Bradstreet Richter, *Painted with Thread: The Art of American Embroidery* (Salem, Massachusetts: Peabody Essex Museum, 2000), 98.

preceded by eighteenth-century English needlepainting insofar as copying is involved within an embroidery practice.[21] For this author, the source imagery that is used in a Berlin work resembles the copying involved in needlepainting, but the issue of industrial-age systematization is not considered, nor is the relation of copying to that of erudite knowledge. My point here, and as will be amply demonstrated in later examples, is not that embroidery histories have not drawn connections between needlepainting and Berlin work, but rather that these tend to be understood in terms of medium-based chronologies. In the previous chapter I argued that the industrial aesthetic of Berlin work copying was appreciated in conceptual terms. In short, it is a matter of argument and interpretation that copying and systematization are foregrounded in the ways that I have proposed.

5.5 and 5.6 Needlework portrait based on Berlin pattern made after John Trumbull's 1792 painting *George Washington Before the Battle of Trenton*, 1852.

[21] Comparatively, Levey considers that Berlin work "completely ousted" the kind of needlepainting practiced by Linwood. Levey, *Discovering Embroidery of the Nineteenth Century*, 25.

5.7 Pictorial Berlin canvas of *Charles I Saying Goodbye to His Children*, a popular image c.1840. The image would have been popular not only as a depiction of royalty, but also because of the drama of the eventual beheading of the King.

5.8 Detail of pictorial Berlin canvas of *Charles I Saying Goodbye to His Children*

Nineteenth-Century Accounts: Berlin Work as Official Knowledge

The researcher of any historical subject is obliged to begin with or to be aware of the most recent publications. The few written examples that I have presented so far demonstrate that there are no adequate contemporary accounts of Berlin work. The nearest, most adequate sources date from the 1960s and 70s. However, these sources are very much wrapped up in the concerns of their time and require an added effort of historicization. One is obliged, consequently, to start from the beginning. My contextualization of written sources therefore begins with the earliest written accounts. The first extant history of needlework is The Countess of Wilton's 1840 *History of Needlework*. The book, which was in actuality authored by Elizabeth Stone, was re-published as an accompaniment to Mrs Henry Owen's 1847 *Illuminated Book of Needlework*.[22] Stone's book, dedicated to the Queen Dowager, presents a chronological account of needlework with a concluding chapter "On Modern Needlework." Hers is the first of its kind and the first to propose a direct link between Linwood and Berlin work. It vaunts Linwood's achievements in fact as "the most beautiful" pictures and shifts from this discussion directly to that of Berlin work. She writes:

> The style of modern embroidery, now so fashionable, from the Berlin patterns, dates from the commencement of the present century. About the year 1804-5, a print-seller in Berlin, named Philipson, published the first coloured design, on checked paper for needlework. In 1810, Madame Wittich, who, being a very accomplished embroideress, perceived the great extension of which this branch of trade was capable, induced her husband, a book and print-seller of Berlin, to engage in it with spirit. From that period the trade has gone on rapidly increasing, though within the last six years the progression has been infinitely more rapid than it had previously been, owing to the number of new publishers who have

[22] Elizabeth Stone, *History of Needlework, Including an Account of the Ancient Historical Tapestries* (1840), published as an accompaniment to Mrs Henry Owen, *The Illuminated Book of Useful and Ornamental Needlework* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1847). Stone's book was originally titled and is sometimes referred to as *The Art of Needle-Work*.

> engaged in the trade. By leading houses, up to the commencement of the year 1840, there have been no less than fourteen thousand copper-plate designs published.[23]

The reader will find in Stone's book those rare statements that are repeated in future histories: the European cities where prints were sold, the number of persons employed to colour the plates, the principal manufacturers, the "Zephyr" dyes for wool. It considers the making of Berlin patterns to be still "in its infancy" and anticipates that improvements in designs and public taste will allow needlework to someday reach the level of art.

In Stone's account, it would seem that the taste for the "glare of colour" produced by dyed yarns had so far prevented the production of "a perfect picture."[24] As she puts it,

> The Berlin publishers cannot be made to understand this: for, when they have a good design to copy from, they mar all by the introduction of some adventitious frippery, as in the 'Bolton Abbey,' where the repose and beautiful effect of the picture is destroyed by the introduction of a bright sky, and straggling bushes of lively green, just where the Artist had thought it necessary to depict the stillness of the inner court of the Monastery, with its solemn grey walls, as a relief to the figures in the foreground.[25]

The reason for this she says is the commercial appeal of bright colours. Silkwork would appear to be more popular in France, with the unfortunate consequence that lack of skill in execution becomes more apparent than is the case with Berlin work. In France, however, there is great care taken so that all of the furnishings of an apartment match, and fashionable decorating is the concern of an entire household, including mother, daughters, cousins, and servants. Stone mentions that Berlin patterns gained in popularity in England in 1831, after a Mr Wilks of Regent street began to import designs

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[23] Stone, *History of Needlework*, 397.
[24] Stone, *History of Needlework*, 399.
[25] Stone, *History of Needlework*, 399.

and materials.[26] She says a few interesting words concerning the matter of originality. "It may be called mechanical," she writes, "but there is infinitely more scope for fancy, taste, and even genius here, than in any other of the large family of 'satin sketches' and embroideries."[27] The needleworker who works in worsted has the ability to exert the genius of a painter, she argues, through the selection, arrangement and combination of colours, as well as light and shade, and in some cases the needle-woman's picture has outshone the original. Through "a judicious change of colour," a worsted copy of Murillo's *Madonna and Child* is reported to have done great honour to the wife of a Lambeth dignitary. The entry then lists the various articles that could be ornamented with the use of Berlin patterns and mentions how working-class girls were more likely to be taught rudimentary "plain-sewing." These women, she says, would not likely have the chance to "know the reality of a picture."[28] This statement by Stone not only tells us that working-class girls did not have the leisure to make fancy work, but also gives an indication that Berlin work was a significant element in the visual arts education of Victorian women. She concludes the book with assertions as to the originality of pictorial embroideries and laments that the subject of needlework has so far been considered too trifling to have obtained notice from "the historical pen."

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[26] A contemporary review of Stone's book applauds Wilks for providing a means of subsistence for a multitude of women and for bringing improvements in the style of designs. The anonymous reviewer writes: "Now, this praise, great as it is, we have reason to know does not go far enough. The individual alluded to [Wilks] not having rested satisfied with being the first to import and receive, but having endeavoured with artist-like feeling to raise the character of the designs and improve the taste of those for whom they are provided. We have lately seen a series of panels, for example, of large size, for the decoration of a dining-room, designed at his establishment, and which seems to be the commencement of a new epoch in art." Review of *The Art of Needle-Work* (the original title of Stone's book) in *The Art-Union* (September 15, 1840): 149.
[27] Stone, *History of Needlework*, 401.
[28] Stone, *History of Needlework*, 403.

The next most widely cited and most important account from the period is Miss Francis Lambert's 1843 *Hand-Book of Needlework*.[29] Lambert's book, said in her preface to have been begun before Stone published hers, provides an extensive, first-hand account of the various practices of needlework.[30] Her knowledge is based in having practiced what she describes and so provides minute details on stitching techniques. In contrast to Stone's book it is not written as a chronology but rather more as a compendium. Statements concerning Berlin work appear in various chapters such as those on materials, wool dying, canvases, patterns, and rules for sizing.

The first mention of Berlin work in Lambert's book comes immediately after a short but glowing presentation on the work of Mary Linwood. The modern style, still "in its infancy," she says, "has already so far progressed as infinitely to surpass the labours of the ingenious women of bygone times."[31] Needlework is the "sister art of painting," she writes, whose aim is to produce "as true a picture of nature as possible".[32] Whereas ancient forms of embroidery are to be admired for the materials and labour they demonstrate, modern pictorial needleworks are to be admired as "works of art."[33] This represents for Lambert the art status of needlework achieved by Mary Linwood. As she puts it: "We would wish to see the needle and embroidery frame... occupying the elevated

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[29] Miss Francis Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework* (New York: Wilry and Putnam, [1842] 1843).
[30] Lambert credits the Countess of Wilton in her introduction. According to Joan Edwards, Lambert copies Stone extensively. She writes: "Anybody who takes the trouble to compare Mrs Stone's text with Miss Lambert's will immediately be struck by the obvious similarities between them, not only in content but also in composition, the wording of some sentences being nearly identical." Joan Edwards, *The First of Joan Edwards' Small Books on the History of Embroidery: Berlin Work* (Dorking, Surrey: Bayford Books, 1980), 9.
[31] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 14.
[32] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 14.
[33] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 14.

position in which the talent of Miss Linwood has placed them."[34] The view that painting is a liberal art and embroidery a "mechanical" art, she says, may be reinforced by the invention of Berlin patterns. The same patterns, she argues, can be realized with or without skill. The corresponding passage suggests that the German needlewomen who make the embroideries for resale demonstrate little taste or judgement – they are mere copyists. The talented needlewoman approaches her canvas like a painting. What makes a needlework a painting is therefore associated with the fact that it is not made for the purpose of resale. The talented needlewoman works like a liberal art practitioner who creates a painting with the needle. Lambert's introduction gives us a sense of the worldview of the modern amateur who defines herself in relation to an older notion of the skilled amateur.

Subsequent chapters state that the introduction of new materials have facilitated the pursuit of needlework: coloured silks, wools, canvas, and coloured-paper patterns. These notes on materials serve as preparatory remarks to a detailed chapter on Berlin patterns. Lambert states that Berlin patterns have greatly contributed to the advancement of needlework, moreso than any other innovation.[35] The patterns by themselves are said to have occasioned the textile industry to improve the quality of associated materials. Patterns are copied from celebrated paintings, or, more frequently, from engravings. Artists "of considerable talent" are required for the execution of the design.[36] Based on information acquired from Wittich, she mentions that the artists are paid according to the proportion of their talent. From an initial drawing an engraving is made, ruled in squares,

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[34] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 14-5.
[35] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 76.
[36] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 77.

with marks that serve as guides for those who will later colour the impressions on paper. Each square is marked with a specific symbol that guides the painting of the pattern. The process of colouring is done by applying the same colour to several patterns at once, from one half-dozen to a dozen. The paint is applied with a square-headed paintbrush, adapted to the width of the square. Lambert remarks on the surprising rapidity with which the paint could be laid on.[37] In some of the patterns there are more than half a million coloured squares. Men, women and children were employed in the painting of charts. Men seldom earned more than three shillings per day, and children from sixpence to tenpence per day.[38]

Lambert goes on to give some advice on how to use Berlin work charts. For the practitioner who wishes to enlarge a pattern, a finely shaded image should be selected. This would allow for more graduated shading and avoid large flat areas of colour. For a pattern to come off successfully, she recommends that the colour of the ground be carefully chosen. Some knowledge of painting and chiaroscuro, she says, will help in the making of figurative work. The expert needlewoman has to improve on the colouring and the shading provided by the pattern. She writes: "In sorting the wools for working historical subjects, attention to a few of the common rules of painting will be found useful in correcting some of the more gross of these errors, such, as for instance, the back and foreground being of the same depth of shade."[39] Half-tints rather than black, she explains, should be used next to a highlight. Some rules in the guidance of taste, such as

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[37] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 78.
[38] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 82-3. The value of three shillings (1840) in contemporary terms (2010) and in terms of comparable labour value (relative to the price of a commodity) would be £109.
[39] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 79.

the mismatch of blue and green, scarlet and yellow, are to be kept in mind. The skills of the needlewoman will be put to the test, she says, with the multiple tones and colours required for the painting of faces.

A later chapter goes into some detail on the various kinds of stitches that can be employed. Tent stitch, cross stitch, and gobelin or tapestry stitch are the most common and are used in different ways to avoid distortion in the image. The basic rule for Berlin work in particular is that the stitches should all point in the same direction. Further on in the book's progress, embroidery has surreptitiously supplanted painting itself. Needlework, with its ancient lineage, is termed "the mother of painting... claiming the priority by many centuries."[40] There is no limit to the degree of improvement that can be brought to the art and the most deprived examples are "mere distorted masses of colour."[41] A good eye for colour, she says, is a "natural gift."[42] This gift can be improved with practice, she argues, and Lambert's last words on Berlin work emphasize discernment cultivated through the understanding of painting.

Lambert's *Hand-Book of Needlework* is the most detailed and complete source on the history and practice of Berlin work. Many other books were published at this time but most of these were guidebooks and were less informed by the practice of painting. Esther Brampton Owen's 1847 *Illuminated Book of Needlework*, for instance, which is prefaced by the Countess of Wilton's *History of Needlework*, offers a technical guide with instructions for 32 types of embroidery canvas stitches. It recommends Berlin work to the user as it provides for "the application of the inventive powers of those by whom it is

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[40] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 112.
[41] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 137.
[42] Lambert, *Hand-Book of Needlework*, 140. Lambert cites the science of phrenology as giving proof that not all individuals perceive colour with the same power.

cultivated, to a measureless extent; and that it is capable of presenting new forms of beauty, as varied as those of the kaleidoscope, whose fleeting images it so successfully perpetuates."[43] The book is not concerned with pictorial Berlin work, however, but is dedicated to abstract ornamentation. Owen adds to our knowledge the fact that many books with Berlin patterns were available on the market, often repeating existing patterns. Her own patterns, she assures the reader, are copyrighted property and as such original. The patterns in this case are not pictorial Berlin work charts, but are line-by-line descriptions of count number and colour. For instance, a pattern would be described as such: "First row, 2 black, 11 primrose, 2 black, 3 primrose, 14 black. Second row," etc, etc.[44] Owen assures the reader that her patterns have been tested and will not lead the needleworker into error, as is the case with other similar books. As she puts it,

> Again, there are in the works already published many inaccuracies *in the descriptions of the methods to be followed*, in producing particular patterns. The writer has often, after following most carefully the order laid down in these descriptions, been disappointed by the result. It is presumed that these inaccuracies have presented themselves to many ladies, and that in not a few cases the process of Penelope has been repeated, not from choice, but from necessity.[45]

Owen illuminates this statement with a footnote that tells the story of Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, who eluded the solicitations of suitors by stitching a tapestry by day and unstitching it at night. Such pattern books, she says, if untested, could baffle the genius, or worse, discourage the beginner. Some of the plates in her book are coloured and as such are said to better recommend themselves to the practiced eye of the artist.[46] Colour, she explains, is as important as form and if neglected can lead to very different results in

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[43] Owen, *The Illuminated Book of Useful and Ornamental Needlwork*, 1.
[44] Owen, *The Illuminated Book of Useful and Ornamental Needlwork*, 35.
[45] Owen, *The Illuminated Book of Useful and Ornamental Needlwork*, 3.
[46] Owen, *The Illuminated Book of Useful and Ornamental Needlework*, 4.

execution. As far as patterns are concerned, what Owen was offering her buyers is far less than what was given with most Berlin charts. What this exercise in marketing represents, however, is something akin to what nineteenth-century guidebooks offered to the "modern amateur," a compendium with clear instructions for stitching, accompanied by new patterns that have been verified and made more user-friendly through colouring.

Miss Camilla Toulmin's *The Little Berlin-Wool Worker, or, Cousin Caroline's Visit* of 1844 is somewhat more prosaic than Owen's book as it is written for the formation of young women.[47] The main character in this book is an eleven year-old girl. Her story provides the reader with social reflections, mythological accounts, and stitching information. As a way of showing affection for her parents, Emily leaves behind her dolls and takes up Berlin wool work and embroidery. Another girl of her age is doing the same kind of work but for subsistence purposes. What is interesting about the book is that it teaches young embroiderers to strive to imitate nature and works of art and for this it provides lessons on observation that are specific to visual art, with instructions on shading and colouring that are derived from painting. For instance, a chapter on the Bayeux Tapestry teaches how tent stitch can be used for shading:

> Much that painting has achieved, may be very successfully followed with the needle; and though we do not expect from it the very highest triumphs of art, wonders have been performed by it. A branch of art it certainly is, and a very ancient one too. Do you know, Emily, there is needle-work in existence much older than any paintings; older, even, that those matchless performances which we are accustomed to call the works of the "old masters," most of whom flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?[48]

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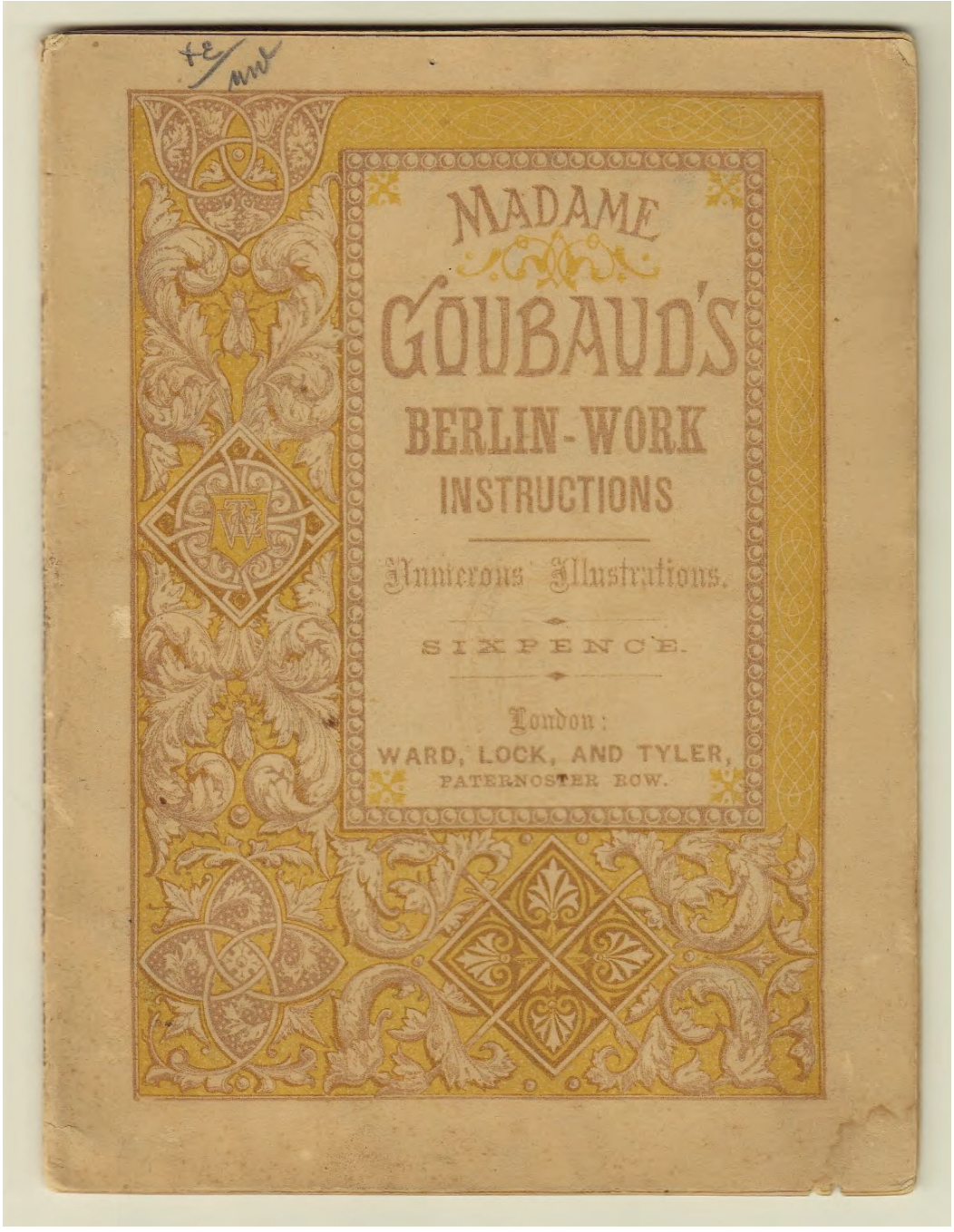
[47] Miss Camilla Toulmin, *The Little Berlin Wool-Worker, or, Cousin Caroline's Visit* (London: W.M.S Orr & Co., 1844).
[48] Toulmin, *The Little Berlin Wool-Worker*, 26.

The book argues that the same rules that are applied to painting should be applied to embroidery. Toulmin's storybook and guidebook for girls therefore provides the kind of information already encountered in Stone and Lambert, but in a more easily accessible introduction.

What is interesting about all of these books is that they provide clear evidence of the paradoxical status of Berlin work as a practice that was modeled on painting. This, however, merely emphasizes the question of medium, which we can see from these examples, caused no uncertain amount of anxiety. There are many ways to account for this, but what I would like to emphasize is the transition from the culture of copying to that of the culture of the modern amateur. The erudition demonstrated by a celebrated progenitor like Linwood was not on offer to young girls like Emily. Whereas the possibilities of success for the medium of embroidery and for the professional woman artist were still imaginable in the late eighteenth century, by the time of the writing of these books, the ideology of bourgeois domesticity had altered the values that could adhere to Berlin work. The quality of industriousness was now less a matter of individual genius and entrepreneurial innovation, and more the result of mass production. The facts of this dramatic epochal transformation are programmed directly into the making of Berlin work. For example, whereas Mary Linwood was known to have regularly stood back to look at her canvas to see how the colours were mixing and how the image was progressing, the maker of Berlin work, in contrast, would sit down with a pattern and systematically reproduce one coloured unit after another. Artistic value, in these terms, was outsourced and made a matter of consumption. We could also consider that whereas Linwood mingled with professional artists, defining her field of practice, the Victorian

housewife derived satisfaction from the ability to participate in a practice that had become, regardless of her input, an emblem of modern industrial values.



5.9 Berlin work guidebook by Madame Adolphe Goubaud, c.1870. This simple how-to book provides 15 pages of stitching instructions. The back cover lists other needlework pattern and instruction books for sale.

5.10 From the sublime to the ridiculous. Simon Meister, *Familie Werburn*, 1834.
5.11 Honoré Daumier, *Monomanes: Le Brodeur* in *Le Charivari* #319 (November 15, 1840).

The commercial aspects involved in the creation of the modern amateur and the status of Berlin work as a gendered activity help to explain its popularity within the nineteenth-century middle-class household. Simon Meister's 1834 painting of the Werburn family provides an idiomatic representation of this context. The male head of the household occupies the top quarter of the painting while the rest of the family occupies the bottom three quarters. In the lower section, Mrs Werburn is seated and surrounded by her children, who are presenting to her various gifts and the fruits of their activity. To the right an elder daughter holds what seems to be a Berlin work pattern. Behind the foliage to the top left is a church, a further indication of the religious propriety that was used to bolster the political power of bourgeois mores. By the 1830s, Berlin work had become a

staple of this typical bourgeois family context. This did not, however, prevent it from becoming the target of satirists. Two examples from the period allow us to consider how Berlin work fit within the gender economy of the bourgeois household. The first, an 1840 lithograph by the French caricaturist Daumier, depicts a man seated at an embroidery frame. While it is not certain that this is an image of someone making Berlin work, it does address the division of gender that is pictured in the Meister painting. The title indicates that this image is from a series called "monomanes," referring to various kinds of mental illness. In this case, a caption explains that errors in nature sometimes occur, as in confusions of proper gender roles. Just as women sometimes wear pants and moustaches, it says, men sometimes practice embroidery or do a little cooking. The second example, titled *The Husband's Complaint*, is a popular poem from the period, attributed to M.T. Morrall. The 1852 poem mocks women and femininity and lampoons the mechanical obsession with which they lent themselves to Berlin work. It reads:

> I hate the name of German wool, in all its colours bright;
> Of chairs and stools in fancy work, I hate the very sight;
> The shawls and slippers that I've seen, the ottomans and bags
> Sooner than wear a stitch on me, I'd walk the street in rags.
>
> I've heard of wives too musical, – too talkative – too quiet,
> Of scoldings and of gaming wives and those too fond of riot;
> But yet of all the errors known, which to the woman fall;
> For ever doing fancy work, I think exceeds them all.
>
> The other day when I went home no dinner was for me,
> I asked my wife the reasons; she answered, 'One, two, three,'
> I told her I was hungry and stamped upon the floor
> She never even looked at me, but murmured 'One green more.'
>
> Of course she made me angry, – but she didn't care for that,
> And chatters while I talk to her 'A white and then a black
> Seven greens and then a purple, – just hold your tongue my dear,
> You really do annoy me so, I've made a wrong stitch here.'

And as for conversation with the eternal frame,
I speak to her of fifty things – she answers just the same!
'Tis 'Yes my love, five reds and then a black, I quite agree with you,
I've done this wrong, seven, eight, nine, ten, an orange then a blue.'

If any lady comes to tea, her bag is first surveyed,
And if the pattern pleases her, a copy there is made.
She stares too at the gentleman, and when I ask her why,
'Tis 'Oh my love, the pattern of his waistcoat struck my eye.'

And if I walk I am inclined ('Tis seldom I go out)
At every worsted shop she sees Oh how she stares about
And there 'tis 'Oh! I must go in that pattern is so rare,
That group of flowers is just the thing I wanted for my chair.'

Besides the things she makes are such touch-me-not affairs,
I dare not even use a screen – a stool and as for a chair!
'Twas only yesterday I put my youngest boy on one
And until then I never knew my wife had such a tongue.

Alas! For my dear little ones, they dare not move or speak:
'Tis, 'Tom be quiet, put down that bag, Harriet, Where's your feet?
Maria standing on a stool – it was not made for use,
Be silent all – three green one red and a puce.'

Ah! The misery of a working wife, with fancy work run wild,
And hands that never do aught else for husband or for child;
Our clothes are rent and minus strings, my house is in disorder,
And all because my lady wife has taken to embroider.

I'll put my children out to school, I'll go across the seas
My wife's so full of fancy work, I'm sure she won't miss me;
E'en while I write she still keeps on her one, two, three and four,
'Tis past all bearing, on my word, I'll not endure it more.

The woman producer of Berlin work could therefore be perceived to be subject to double standards. While being devoted to her embroidery frame was both a privilege and an expectation, these examples suggest that she could easily be chided if she lent herself to it with too much enthusiasm. Beyond this, however, we might read a bit further into this poem since it is the only document of its kind that I am aware of that indicates how the maker of Berlin work had to apply herself to this systematized mode of production much

like the factory worker who became an appendage to the machine. The poem reveals deep-seated contradictions that are central to the progression of industrial civilization and might be missed if we focus too exclusively on the question of gender. What can be asserted is therefore that by the mid-nineteenth-century, the qualities of needlepainting had been transformed through Berlin work into matters of Victorian morality and bourgeois utilitarianism.

More serious criticism than Daumier's caricature and Morrall's poem, however, came from ecclesiastical quarters. An 1843 text, titled *Hints on Ornamental Needlework, As Applied to Ecclesiastical Purposes*, remarks that a great deal of time and ingenuity is wasted on "frivolities" like worsted work, satin stitch and bead work. Such ingenuity would be better employed, the book says, if "it were occupied in preparing an offering to God for the adornment of His holy dwelling places".[49] Rather than adopt the "dapper" Gothic style, with all of its shading, it states, "embroideresses" should look to the ancients, who understood the art of enriching.

The practice of Berlin work was so widespread that by the mid-nineteenth century it was often regarded as synonymous with embroidery. Victim of its own success, different kinds of criticism were leveled against it. In *Dress as a Fine Art* of 1854, Mrs Merrifield complained that Berlin work was oriented towards the "shameless copying" of paintings, deemed libelous.[50] Related to this question of copyright, a law to protect the property interests of Berlin work pattern designers was passed in 1842. Michael T. Morall, author of a history of needlemaking and of the poem cited above, considered Berlin work a

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[49] C.E.M., *Hints on Ornamental Needlework, As Applied to Ecclesiastical Purposes* (London: James Burns, 1843), 22.
[50] Mrs Merrifield, *Dress as a Fine Art* (1854) cited in Geoffrey Warren, *A Stitch in Time: Victorian and Edwardian Needlecraft* (London: David & Charles, 1976), 36.

source of amusement for women, and a "horror" to their husbands and brothers.[51] He writes, nevertheless, that the needle "has handed down to us many an historic picture, and illustrated the life of many a saint".[52] What is unusual in his account, however, is the recognition of how the prestige of embroidery within middle-class households added to the labours heaped upon working-class women. The latter, who were taught from an early age how to sew clothes and do plain work, were also hired to make and decorate the clothing of middle-class patrons. A middle-class woman might very well celebrate the Berlin work her daughter had made at school, Morrall says, but this same girl has not applied any of her skills to plain sewing. Instead, it is working-class girls, "wretched little creatures," who are obliged to toil for shop sellers, milliners and dress makers. Shut out from the breeze and sunshine, seven days per week, and anywhere from 12 to 18 hours per day, they scramble to have dresses, bonnets, mantles and caps ready for the morning after or the next day's ball. "But what matters these sighs, and tears, and murmurings," he writes, "they would not be seen there; no, but they were seen somewhere else, and heard also, as truly as the sighs and groans of the negro slaves."[53] Morrall's comments on the hardships experienced by the working class were not uncommon in the mid-nineteenth century. The division of labour that allowed middle-class patrons to purchase hand-painted charts was therefore redoubled in the privilege of having the time to execute the patterns and partake in the visual culture that Berlin work imagery was a part of.

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[51] Michael T. Morrall, *History and Description of Needle Making*, 2nd edition (London: Abel Morrall, [1852] 1854), 5.
[52] Morrall, *History and Description of Needle Making*, 5.
[53] Morrall, *History and Description of Needle Making*, 6.

By all accounts, it is well-known that by the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the "industrial aesthetic" that was once associated with Berlin work gradually lost its progressive, industrial age appeal. The creation of the Royal School of Needlework, founded in 1872, sounded the death knell for Berlin work. According to Rozsika Parker, the school provided training for gentlewomen who, until married, could support themselves with professional embroidery.[54] The kind of needlework that the school encouraged, associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement, was modeled on seventeenth-century crewel embroidery. To complete art needlework patterns, the practitioner needed to know how to embroider since the canvas no longer directed the placement of the stitches. The natural shapes and colours of art needlework, which flourished in the 1880s, required somewhat more skill than Berlin work. A key document from this era is the *Handbook of Embroidery*, which was published by the School of Needlework in 1880.[55] The book was edited by Lady Marian Alford, the Vice President of the School. It distinguishes itself from guidebooks in that it does not offer complete technical directions, which could only be acquired through direct instruction. It is rather a course textbook that seeks to define "the principles that have guided Eastern and Western embroideries at their best periods, hoping thus to save the designers of the future from repeating exploded experiments against received canons of good taste (...) but leaving room for originality."[56] The maker of Berlin work, we are left to understand from this book, has fallen into ignorance.

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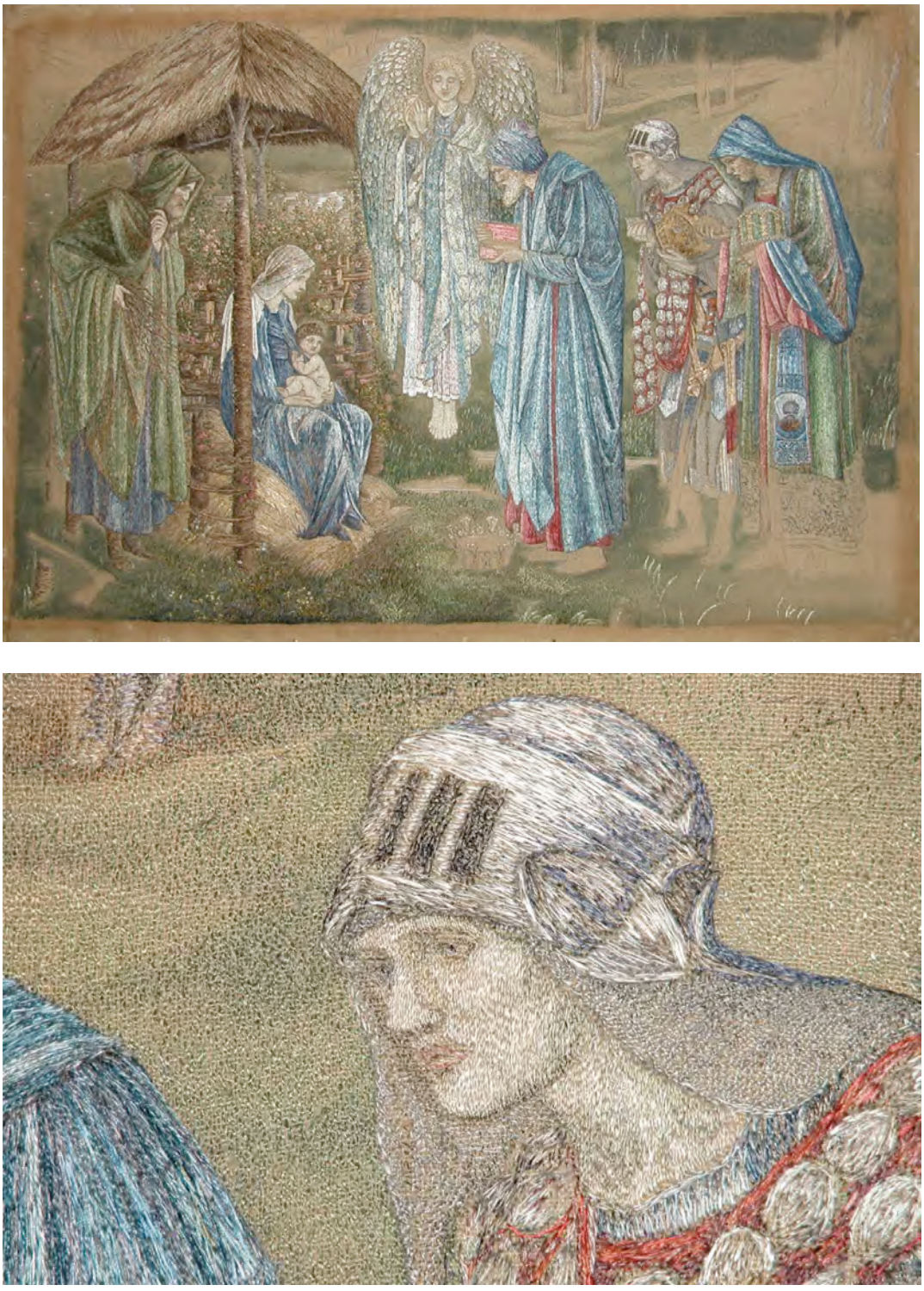
[54] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: Routledge, [1984] 1989), 183.
[55] Letitia Higgin, *Handbook of Embroidery* (East Molesey and Surrey: Royal School of Needlework, [1880] 2010).
[56] Lady Alford in Higgin, *Handbook of Embroidery*, vii.



5.12 Example of Arts and Crafts embroidery. *Star of Bethlehem* (mistitled by V&A/*Adoration of the Magi*) *(after Edward Burne-Jones)*, extremely fine embroidered linen with watercolour and pen drawing, unfinished, 1890, 43.5 x 64.5 cm. The coloured threads are worked together, not unlike painting, allowing for fine gradations.

Twentieth-Century Accounts: Berlin Work as Submerged Knowledge

By the turn of the century, critical favour had turned against Berlin work. Even though it remained popular, fewer new designs were created and the form stagnated considerably. In the 1870s the Art Needlework Movement was in the process of ousting Berlin wool work. As late as 1882, and according to *The Universal Guide to Decorative Art Embroidery*, Berlin work was nevertheless a popular favourite. While some had tried to apply the new art needlework designs to Berlin work techniques, these were largely unsuccessful. On the whole, there were no major publications in the nineteenth century that provided more information on Berlin work than had those of Stone and Lambert. The first most significant statement on Berlin work in the early twentieth century is found in Albert Frank Kendrick's 1905 publication *English Embroidery*.[57] Kendrick was a medievalist, an authority on fiberarts and Keeper of the Department of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum, a museum created in 1852 and dedicated to the collection of decorative arts and design. Kendrick is credited with having built the fiberworks collection at the Museum and made a reputation for himself with his essays and books on textiles.[58]

Kendrick's account is the first formalist and medium-specific history of embroidery produced in England. Needlework is said by Kendrick to have appeared with the beginning of every civilization. It is presented as a decorative "craft," with each historical example corresponding to the society that has produced it.[59] Great works of

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[57] A.F. Kendrick, *English Embroidery* (London: B.T. Batsford, [1905] 1913).
[58] See *Dictionary of Art Historians: A Biographical Dictionary of Historic Scholars, Museum Professionals and Academic Historians of Art*, available at: http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/kendricka.htm.
[59] Kendrick, *English Embroidery*, 1.

English textiles are championed as "monuments of skill and patience," made by men in monasteries and women in domestic interiors and often destroyed for the metals that were woven into them.[60] The book is less concerned with contemporary embroidery than it is with the high points of history, in particular the great ecclesiastical works and those made for the monarchy. The book concludes with a short chapter on the eighteenth century, noting the tendency towards naturalism, which encroaches on "the province of the painted picture."[61] Embroidery of a pictorial type, including imitations of popular engravings, is said to have flourished in the second half of the century. In a few damning statements, and as a way to conclude his book, Kendrick sums up everything he has to say about needlepainting and Berlin work in just a few lines. He writes:

> Copies of oil-paintings in wool-work, such as were produced by Miss Mary Linwood (b. 1755, d.1845) and Miss Mary Knowles (b.1733, d.1807), "the Quaker, that works the sutile pictures," represent the climax of this mistaken art. (...) Of the nineteenth century we must say very little. Taste during the earlier part of the century was not good. Since then a revival has set in. Excellent results have already been attained, and there is good promise for the future.[62]

Unlike previous accounts, which were written in the context of Berlin work's apogee, Kendrick's book was written after the privileging of art needlework by the Royal School of Needlework and the tendency of modernism towards formalism.

As gatekeeper of what became one of the most important collections of textiles, Kendrick set the tone for the historical reception of Berlin work for years to come. An example of this can be noticed in Emily Leigh Lowes' *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*.[63] The book credits the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which

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[60] Kendrick, *English Embroidery*, 2-3.
[61] Kendrick, *English Embroidery*, 101.
[62] Kendrick, *English Embroidery*, 106.
[63] Mrs Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908).

it considers "without compare" in the illustration of textile art.[64] Like Kendrick's account, Lowes' book is also written with a view to writing formalist art history. Needlework is presented as "handicraft" and "hobby" and museum collecting is said to have been exercised with great care as to the most illustrative examples.[65] Of pictorial needlework of the eighteenth century, examples of which could be found in almost every English home, she says, "much of the work is intensely bad".[66] They are not works of art, she adds, regardless of what their owners might think. Lowes' writing is oriented towards a modernist appreciation of high art and is anxious to distinguish between the good and the bad, the high and the low. A paragraph on silkwork gives evidence of this. It reads:

> The explanation is that just as the modern needlewoman goes to a Needlework Depôt and obtains pieces of embroidery already commenced and the design of the whole drawn ready for completion, so these old needle pictures were sold ready for embroidering, the outline of the trees sketched in fine sepia lines, the distant landscape already painted, the faces and hands of the figures charmingly coloured, in many instances by first-class artists. When we remember that the eighteenth century was *par excellence* the great period of English portrait painting and colour printing, we can understand that possibly really fine artists were willing to paint these exquisite faces on fine silk and satin, just as good artists of the present day often paint "pot-boilers" while waiting for fame.[67]

What is significant about this passage is that it ignores and unravels almost all of the elements that went into the making of Berlin work. The enthusiasm with which the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie lent itself to scientific innovation has been reduced to matters of aesthetic appreciation. This form of cultural appreciation, or connoisseurship, rigidly evaluates needlework according to the standards of modern art.

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[64] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 7.
[65] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 7-9.
[66] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 335.
[67] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 336.

Copying, as Lowes mentions further, is to be evaluated strictly in terms of naturalistic verisimilitude rather than in terms of the intellectual culture. Continuing her discussion of silkwork, she writes:

> When a well-executed picture is produced it is worth money, but so far I have seen none, except at the Royal School of Needlework, where the copying of old pictures of the period is exceedingly well done, and not intended to deceive. The prices, however, are almost prohibitive, as no modern needlework picture is worth from £15 to £30. They are, after all, only copies, and in no sense of the word works of art.[68]

A chapter on needlework in the nineteenth century reiterates Kendrick's judgement with the statement: "It were kindest to ignore 19th century needlework, but in a book treating of English embroidery something must be said to bridge over the time when Needlecraft as an Art was *dead*."[69] She adds: "During the earlier part of the century taste was bad, during the middle it was beyond criticism, and from then to the time of the... aesthetic revival all and everything made by woman's fingers ought to be buried, burnt, or otherwise destroyed."[70] The originator of this "bad period," she says, referring to Berlin work, is Miss Linwood, "who conceived the idea of copying oil paintings in woolwork."[71] Lowes mentions the year of Linwood's death and adds: "Would that she had never been born!"[72]

Lowes' advocacy of art for art's sake and her cultural conservatism are most evidently expressed in the passages on Berlin work. These are worth citing at length:

> When we think of the many years with which English women have spent over those wickedly hideous Berlin-work pictures, working their bad drawing and verily crude colours into those awful canvases, and imagining that they were earning undying fame as notable women for all the succeeding ages, death was

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[68] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 343.
[69] Italics in the original. Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 349.
[70] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 349.
[71] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 349.
[72] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 350.

> too good for Miss Linwood. The usual boiling oil would have been a fitter end! Miss Linwood made a great *furore* at the time of her invention, and held an exhibition in the rooms now occupied by Messrs. Puttick & Simpson, Leicester Square. Can we not imagine the shade of the great Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose home and studio these rooms had been, revisiting the glimpses of the moon, and while wandering up and down that famous old staircase forsaking his home for ever after one horrified glance at Miss Linwood's invention?[73]

Lowes makes no mention of the fact that Reynolds supported Linwood and lent her some of his paintings. Reynolds even made recommendations concerning which of his works would be best to copy. Such information, however, does not fit the narrative Lowes wished to construct. She goes on,

> Not only Miss Linwood, but Mrs Delaney [sic] and Miss Knowles made themselves famous for Berlin-wool pictures. The kindest thing to say is that the specimens which are supposed to have been worked by their own hands are considerably better than those of the half-dozen generations of their followers. During the middle and succeeding twenty years of the nineteenth century the notable housewife of every class amused herself, at the expense of her mind, by working cross-stitch pictures with crudely coloured wools (royal blue and rose-pink, magenta, emerald-green, and the deep crimson were supposed to represent the actual colours of Nature), on very coarse ground. Landseer's paintings were favourite studies, "Bolton Abey in the Olden Times" lending itself to a choice range of violent colours and striking incidents. Nothing was too sacred for the Berlin-wool worker to lay hands upon. "The Crucifixion," "The Nativity," "The Flight into Egypt," "The Holy Family" were not only supposed to show the skill of the worker, but also the proper frame of mind of the embroideress possessed. Pleasing little horrors such as the "Head of the Saviour in His Agony," and that of the Virgin with all her tortured mother love for drawing-room, which by the way were also adorned with flowers under glass, and often astonishingly good specimens of fine Chelsea, Worcester, and Oriental china.[74]

Lowes goes on to say that Victorian women undoubtedly had skill but dedicated their work to the unfortunate realism of Landseer and Baxter. The "craze" for Berlin work continues, she says, into the present day, and she gives examples of a contemporary who

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[73] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 350.
[74] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 350-1. Berlin wool in this citation refers to needlepainting with German wool. The citation is also mistaken in that Mrs Delany, although a fine embroiderer, is not known to have produced needlepaintings.

was praised for her black, white and grey copies of images from the *Illustrated London News*, scenes from the South African War, the Death of the Prince, and the memorial statue of Queen Victoria. Rather than waste their time with contemporary subjects, she argues, such women should rather be inspired by the kinds of embroidery that have become national historical treasures, such as those from the medieval period. Lowes' rhetoric is obviously conservative in that she finds very little from the present to be interested in except for the products of the Royal School of Needlework. The greater public, she laments, has no real sense of taste and the important national collections like the Victoria and Albert Museum "might as well be buried" along with their custodians who "might as well be waxwork dummies."[75] Until the achievements of the historical past are matched, she says, "Art for Art's sake will continue dead."[76] As a final remark, and in relation to my discussion of Berlin work as partaking in an industrial aesthetic, it is worth mentioning these lines from Lowes' conclusion:

> Needlework as a national art is as dead as the proverbial door-nail; whether or not it ever regains its position as a craft is a matter of conjecture. Personally, I incline to the belief that it is absolutely extinct. The death-knell rang for all times when the sewing-machine was invented. The machine has been a very doubtful blessing, as it has allowed even the art of stitchery in ordinary work to slide into the limbo of forgotten things.[77]

The writings of early twentieth-century authors like Kendrick and Lowes allow us to trace the shifts that had taken place between the 1870s and the early 1900s. In 1886, for instance, Lady Marion Alford, one of the two founders of the Royal School of Needlework, wrote that Linwood's works were attractive but not "legitimate"

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[75] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 353-4.
[76] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 354.
[77] Lowes, *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*, 375.

embroideries.[78] For Alford, they would have been better as decorative pieces than as framed imitations of oil paintings, which she says led embroidery on the wrong track. The School of Needlework therefore had a particular role in imparting an idea of medium specificity and the consequent view that Berlin work, even in the exemplary form of needlepainting, illegitimately encroached on the province of painting.

The development of modernism in nineteenth-century art, with its almost exclusive focus on the medium, made it such that there was no future for a practice like needlepainting and since Berlin work was modeled on the former, it failed to meet the expectations of those who wished to understand embroidery in modernist terms. Although there are indications of the possible decline of Berlin work with the appearance of art needlework, it is only through later figures like Kendrick and Lowes that we can notice and understand how it is that circumstances for this practice had changed irrevocably. Such critiques must have carried an immeasurable amount of veracity since we do not notice anything worth mentioning about Berlin work in the first decades of the century. In the postwar period Berlin works from the nineteenth century become a matter of history and collecting.

In the pages below I examine histories of Berlin work and Victorian embroidery that were written between the 1960s and 1980s. The first of these is Barbara Morris' 1962 text *Victorian Embroidery*.[79] The dust jacket presents the book as the first serious study of English embroidery for the period 1830 to 1901. I will limit my observations to what she says about pictorial Berlin work. It is interesting to note that Morris worked as

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[78] Marion Alford, *Needlework as Art* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1886), 395.
[79] Barbara Morris, *Victorian Embroidery* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962).

Assistant Keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum and that the book's foreword was written by Hugh Wakefield, Keeper of the Department of Circulation at the V&A, who notes that Victorian embroidery is increasingly important to collectors. "They have passed through the obscurity of being merely old-fashioned," he writes, "and are now coming to be assessed for their own intrinsic merit and beauty."[80]

In the preface, Morris notes that Berlin work was the most popular type of embroidery for this period, in part, because it was not difficult to execute. She writes:

> It was hardly surprising that Berlin wool-work should have such a wide appeal. No real skill with the needle was required, merely an ability to count and an infinite amount of time and patience. Not only could the ladies cover their chairs with needlework of their own making but, with the aid of the Berlin patterns, adorn their walls with works of art after the most famous painters. A needlework copy of Landseer's "Bolton Abbey," or even Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper", done in natural colours, was surely a higher work of art than a mere black and white mezzotint reproduction. (...) There can scarcely have been a Victorian middle-class home that did not have its quota of Berlin wool-work, a proud testimony to the industry of the female members of the household.[81]

Morris' writing displays much of the enthusiasm for Berlin work that was evident in the nineteenth-century accounts of Lambert and Stone. She states that Berlin work is the most collectible form of Victorian embroidery and that it has regained its charm and appeal after the period of reform of the 1870s. The passion for art needlework at that time, she says, ousted the craze for Berlin work. Interestingly, Morris argues that it was class differences that account for the struggle over its meaning, as the Royal School of Needlework was headed by aristocratic women who viewed Berlin work as a middle-class pursuit. Coming under Royal patronage, the School emphasized types of work that required more time and skill so that embroidery could become a more exclusive art

[80] Hugh Wakefield cited in Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 5.
[81] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 8.

form.[82] With these claims, Morris' book is typical of postwar accounts that offer interpretations of embroidery that make use of social history methods and that offer class and gender analyses.

Morris begins her book with a brief historical chronology and then offers chapter-by-chapter descriptions of specific types of embroidery. Chapter one draws on the writings of Elizabeth Stone (Wilton) and Mrs Henry Owen, mentioning the first chart sellers and the medieval themes of *troubadour style* paintings. Unlike these earlier authors, who would have taken for granted the subject matter of the patterns that were in circulation, Morris describes these themes for a reader who is not aware of this now submerged content. She explains that Berlin design producers made patterns that ranged from historical and romantic to religious and sentimental subject matter, in particular, as these themes were popular on the English market.[83] Besides the plentiful selection of old master works that were available in the early decades of the nineteenth century, biblical pictures were copied from contemporary paintings that were also known through chromo-lithographed illustrations in family bibles. Unlike Berlin works applied to furniture, which are easy to date because of the furniture style, pictorial Berlin works are difficult to date; a popular pattern pattern could remain fashionable for as many as forty years, with patterns being sold to practitioners at full price and then taken back at half price to be resold.[84] Likewise, the patterns themselves are undated and therefore do not allow for accurate chronologies. Concerning the sale of patterns, Morris mentions that traveling

[82] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 8.
[83] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 23.
[84] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 23.

agents first distributed samples to women's homes. She then goes into great detail concerning the manufacturing of charts.

A chapter on ecclesiastical embroidery describes how it is that before the Arts and Crafts Movement began to work to correct embroidery, Church writings had in the 1840s complained about low quality and lack of intelligent purpose.[85] An 1843 text is cited which states that embroiderers should emulate ancient models such as illuminated manuscripts and stained glass rather than the prettiness of hearts and rosebuds. Insofar as "the ladies" work for the drawing room and not the altar, their work strays from "church feeling."[86] A later chapter on art needlework reiterates the theme of the decline of Berlin work, which was a consequence of both the Church's interest in embroidery and the innovations of William Morris. As she puts it,

> Although Berlin wool-work lingered on throughout the 1870's, it was on its way out; and as in the 1840's it had eclipsed all other types of work, so by 1880 it was itself eclipsed by the craze for "Art Needlework". (…) The interest brought about by the Church, and above all by William Morris, led to the foundation of a number of societies for the propagation of needlework as an art. The first, and the most important, was the Royal School of Art Needlework, founded in 1872 under the presidency of H.R.H. the Princess Christian Schleswig-Holstein.[87]

The purpose of the Royal School of (Art) Needlework was to restore ornamental needlework as an art form. Designs for the School's more than 100 workers were prepared by leading designers, including Morris, Burne-Jones, Frederick Leighton and G.F. Bodley. The kind of work produced by the School was known as art needlework and Kensington embroidery. Numerous organizations promoted the production and sale of art embroidery, including the Ladies Work Society (1875) and the Decorative

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[85] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 85.
[86] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 88.
[87] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 30, 113.

Needlework Society (1880), and undertook the employment of impoverished gentlewomen. Although these societies showed work in international exhibitions, they agreed to keep the names of their middle-class members anonymous. Morris argues that the basic principle of these societies was to revive embroidery through the study of historic examples. She cites Lewis F. Day's *Art in Needlework* of 1900, which claimed that the tradition of embroidery had been broken until the advent of art needlework.[88] After this revivalism was launched, she argues, the craze for art needlework became as widespread as that of Berlin work, which, she says, "was ousted from favour."[89] Whereas previous texts simply asserted the displacement of Berlin work by art needlework, Morris's book is the first to attempt a sociological explanation of this phenomenon.

Despite the narrative of decline that by 1900 had become standard, Morris points to a number of inconsistencies in such accounts. She cites Mrs Oliphant's 1877 novel *Carita*, which showed how women had abandoned Berlin work, but emphasizes that a character in the novel considers art needlework to be easier to execute than Berlin work, a statement that is uncommon from the point of view of Berlin work's opponents. Morris illustrates the conviction of many, promoted by the School of Needlework, that the new kinds of crewel work, however inept, were automatically closer to "Art."[90] She cites Agnes Garrett, who wrote in her 1871 book *House Decorations* that many young ladies

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[88] Day's book is specifically concerned with the then contemporary practice of art needlework. Unlike Kendrick's book, it is not a history of embroidery. It is similar to Kendrick's account, however, in that it seeks to actively suppress the practice of Berlin work.
[89] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 121-2.
[90] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 122.

"think they have discovered a royal road to an artistic effect".[91] Morris argues that many art needlework patterns, however more "naturalistic," became as cliché as Berlin work and that contemporaries criticized the School for its excess of floral designs, birds, cranes and peacocks. Art needlework in fact eventually came under much of the same kinds of routine criticism as had Berlin work. For all of its vaunted restoration of tradition, it too was highly dependent on patterns put out by commercial houses and, from the point of view of the embroiderer, art needlework showed no greater originality in conception. A concluding chapter on embroidery in America describes the "onslaught" of Berlin work from the 1840s to the 1880s, with a particular emphasis on romantic and biblical scenes.

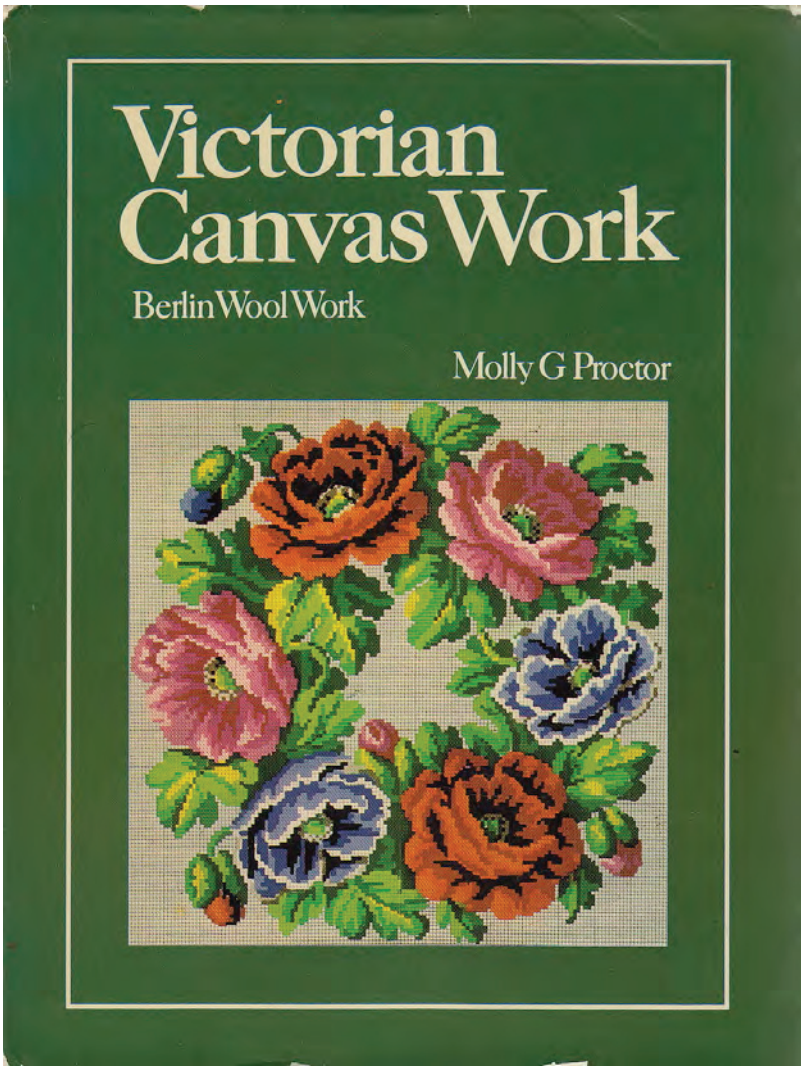
The first monograph dedicated exclusively to Berlin work was written by Molly Proctor and published in 1972. The book's sleeve mentions, as part of its *raison d'être*, the revival of interest in and the collectibility of Victorian Berlin works. More importantly, perhaps, it notes the popularity of needlepoint at the time of its publishing. In the early 1970s, in the context of the women's movement and the counter-cultural interest in handicrafts, Berlin work patterns, including abstract designs, had made something of a comeback. In this context, the book not only provides a socio-historical account of the practice, but includes patterns and practical information for users. For those women who wished to flirt with nostalgic notions of femininity, Berlin work designs once again provided easy access to needlework. At the same time, the book's short introduction leaves nothing to doubt concerning its feminist inspiration:

> It is a great pity, but nevertheless a fact, that women's work has never had the praise or wide-spread publicity that has been accorded to men. Although there have been many talented needlewomen throughout history, one would be hard pressed to name even three or four. Even in the feminine pursuit of Berlin wool

[91] Morris, *Victorian Embroidery*, 124.

> work, it is not the names of ladies employed making the patterns or embroidering the chair covers that are known, but the men who published the patterns and manufactured the canvas and wool.[92]

The book's table of contents includes a first chapter on "Berlin wool work and the ladies who made it," followed by chapters on materials, patterns, samplers, furniture, pictures, the 1851 Exhibition, stitches, new work and restoration.



5.13 Molly Proctor's *Victorian Canvas Work: Berlin Wool Work*, 1972. The first detailed study of Berlin work.

[92] Molly Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work: Berlin Wool Work* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1972), 6.

5.14 Berlin work, front (faded) and back, most likely made in "gaslight colours" with the Christ figure's sash in Perkin's Mauve. Based on John Singleton Copley's *The Tribute Money* (1782).

5.15 Berlin works made by young sisters whose names and year of production are stitched at the bottom. The bottom left reads: "Anne Watkins aged 10 1865"; on the right: "Mary Watkins Aged 11 1865."

5.16 Example of Berlin wool work. Unknown maker, embroidered picture (interior domestic scene with an older woman offering a chicken at the window), c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, 54 x 43 cm.

5.17 Example of Berlin wool work. Unknown maker, embroidered picture (Scottish battlefield, several figures including two men on horseback and a woman being cared for), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 60 x 48 cm.

5.18 Example of Berlin wool work. Unknown maker, embroidered picture (biblical scene, Jesus speaking with a woman), c.1810-1890. Wool and silk on canvas, 39.4 x 33 cm.

5.19 Example of Berlin wool work. Unknown maker, embroidered picture (religious portrait, perhaps Saint Peter), c. 1810-1870. Wool and silk on canvas, 50.8 x 43.2 cm.

5.20 Example of Berlin wool work. Unknown maker, embroidered picture (pheasants in woodland), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 60 x 48 cm.

Proctor's first chapter reproduces the usual account of the rise and decline of Berlin work, from the 1800s to the 1870s. It states that little has been written on the subject and adds that most of its critics have been from the upper classes. Wilton (Stone) and Lambert are singled out for recognition and Proctor repeats their descriptions of the early years of Berlin work manufacturing. She adds to this some sociological details concerning the daily life of the average middle-class woman. She writes:

> To understand the enormous popularity of Berlin work it is necessary to realise the far-reaching effects of the new Industrial Age and to know how the ladies of the new middle class occupied their lives. As more and more people acquired wealth, the hallmark of a 'lady' became one of idleness; it was a point of social pride that the lady of the house and her daughters should pass their hours with as little domestic work as possible.[93]

Needlework was a daily activity of the nineteenth-century middle-class woman, along with the selection of daily menus, the instruction of children, reading books and playing music, and the paying and receiving of calls. Women practiced their needlework while conversing with other women, in private and in public. In some Victorian homes, plain work – clothes for children, undergarments, and household linens – was done in the morning, and fancy work was reserved for the afternoon and evening, when one was more likely to have visitors.[94] In some of the more puritanical households, fancy work in coloured threads was reserved for Sundays. In most Victorian families, Proctor explains, readings from the Christian Bible were routine and prayers were conducted by the head of the family. Because of this strict adherence to religion, needleworks of religious subjects were considered suitable for Sunday work and were hung in nurseries and

[93] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 8.
[94] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 10-11.

schoolrooms.[95] The subjects and conception of pictorial Berlin work therefore shifted from the concerns of secular enlightenment gentility in the early century to that of Victorian moral respectability by the mid century. Towards the end of the century, and as it became more acceptable for women to find employment, the need to find activities to keep one from being idle was no longer essential. By the 1880s, Proctor says, Berlin work had become a hobby.

In her chapter on materials, Proctor mentions the "fancy work" shops where Berlin wools were sold. From the early 1800s to the First World War, these shops were known as Berlin Wool Repositories. They stocked all of the materials that one needed to complete a project: silks, cottons, wools, canvas, linen, sewing tools, patterns, etc.[96] Wool colours were first made from natural dyes.[97] They were considered long lasting and blended very easily. "Gas colours," made from aniline dyes, were introduced in the 1850s and Proctor mentions that it took only a few years for them to flood the market. Aniline dyes were considered more difficult to mix without producing discordant effects and were also subject to fading.[98] A chapter on patterns mentions that the people hired to paint in the squares of printed patterns exercised a good deal of discretion in their choice of colours, leading to even further variations in final execution. Patterns could be bought at Berlin Wool Repositories or ordered from German suppliers. Some mid-century patterns of lesser quality were given away as bonus features of women's monthly magazines. Proctor also mentions that the Registration of Designs Act of 1842 required

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[95] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 11.
[96] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 13.
[97] By the end of the nineteenth century, the DMC company was producing as many as 600 colours. Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 17.
[98] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 16.

that Berlin pattern designers make payments or receive permissions to copy an artist's work.[99] Most of the records from the first producers of Berlin work patterns have been lost, she says, and consequently little is known about them.

After describing samplers, Regency furniture, chair coverings, sofas, cushions, screens, footstools and carpets, Proctor dedicates a lengthy chapter to pictorial Berlin work. She mentions that because of the wear of decorated furnishings, there are more examples of pictorial Berlin work in existence than any other form. She credits Mary Linwood as the originator of the idea of making needlework imitations of oil paintings and describes how, before Berlin work was invented, silkwork was the most common method used for the production of embroidered pictures. Some mid-century criticism of Berlin work patterns considered them a libel on the paintings they copied.[100] Despite such criticism, Berlin patterns abounded as they were often the only type of artwork that the middle-classes had in their homes. Moreover, Proctor says, people admired the skill required to make these works of many shades, colours and thousands of stitches. Any one design could have been produced hundreds of times, especially religious subjects taken from the Old Testament.[101] The largest and most impressive nineteenth-century pictures, however, tend to draw on subjects from English and Scottish history. It was common that the size of a needlework would imitate the size of the original painting. A large pattern, such as *Mary Queen of Scots mourning over the death of Black Douglas after the Battle of*

[99] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 27-32.
[100] Proctor mentions the criticisms of Mrs Merrifield, mentioned above.
[101] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 94.

Langford, could cost as much as £40.[102] Pictures of the Royal Family and Royal residences, historical and contemporary, were also quite popular. Among genre and decorative themes, animals and birds (parrots and tropical birds especially) were made into patterns, as were pets, cats and dogs, sentimental scenes, exotic scenes, farmers and fishermen, cottagers, and children playing.

5.21 Jane Brumlen, embroidered Berlin work canvas based on Charles Landseer's *Mary Queen of Scots mourning over the dying Douglas at the Battle of Langside*, c.1870. Victoria and Albert Museum.

[102] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 98. The relative contemporary value (2010), in terms of labour value for this amount would be £28,800 and £46,300 in terms of income value.

5.22 Contemporary display of Brumlen's canvas at the V&A. The wall label mentions that the embroidery is stitched from a readymade kit on a canvas already marked with the image. The work is included among other "popular" Gothic articles from the period. Considering its popularity, Berlin work is given very little display space in this, the most important textile collection.

5.23 Berlin work after Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, signed Mrs. J. Morris, 1851, 87.3 x 167 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum.

The seventh chapter in Proctor's book is dedicated to The Great Exhibition of 1851. The Crystal Palace, as Paxton's glass and steel marvel was called, was dedicated to Works of Industry of All Nations. The 1851 Exhibition could be considered the high point of Berlin work production and a culminating moment of the social forces and concerns that I have described in previous chapters. According to Proctor, the catalogue for the exhibition contains many mentions of Berlin work. Most of these came from Great Britain but others came from Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and the United States. In a listing of textiles, machine embroidery was classified under "Embroidery" and Berlin wool work under "Industrial Work."[103] Berlin works were exhibited along with examples of lace, tapestry and carpet. Among the entries to the Exhibition, the most popular subject was Berlin works of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. Six entries were proposed.[104] These were of varying sizes, some of them larger than the original. Four entries of *Mary Queen of Scots and the dying Douglas* were also submitted, as well as three of the Royal Family. At the Exhibition, two copies of *Joseph presents his Father to Pharaoh* were shown, as well as large embroidered representations of *Esther and Mordecai*, *The Arrival of Rebecca*, *Bolton Abbey*, *Hawking Party* by Taylor, and Herring's *Feeding the Horses*.[105] Berlin wool carpets were also shown, including a large 914 x 884 cm carpet that belonged to the Queen. Although it later went missing and there are no visual records of it, the "Queen's carpet" is known to have been made by 150 women and designed by the architect John Papworth. It was said to have

[103] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 115.
[104] Proctor's text leads one to assume that all of the entries were exhibited. According to my own research, based on catalogues of the Exhibition, this was not the case.
[105] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 116.

contained 17,340,000 stitches.[106] Berlin patterns were also exhibited, as well as canvasses and completed works. Five pattern makers from Berlin are listed: A. Todt, Gruenthal, Neie and Seiffert, Konig, and Carl Stolle.

The rest of Proctor's book is dedicated to stitching instructions and there is a concluding chapter on new work and restoration. For the ambitious contemporary needleworker who wishes to recover the art of nineteenth-century Berlin work, Proctor recommends a good pattern and perhaps a visit to a museum or the antique store to become familiar with styles. Since printed coloured charts are difficult to find, she says, the contemporary needleworker may wish to use a painted canvas. However, she warns, modern canvases are crudely coloured. The concerns of the mid-nineteenth-century needleworker, it would seem, have barely changed.

With texts like Proctor's in mind, genealogical investigation has to consider the intellectual, social and cultural assumptions of the author. If the 1851 Exhibition is indeed the high point of Berlin work, then we have to consider why it is that a commentator on the 1853 Irish Exhibition could criticize it just the same:

> To future generations it will be a matter of astonishment that in the first half of the 19th century... the production of fantastic forms in what is called Berlin work, should have occupied months, frequently years of female education... The inmates of even our fashionable boarding schools devoted their time to the production of covers for footstools, which attempted artistic decorations which would positively offend the eye of the veriest savages.[107]

The idea that I wish to reiterate here is the fact that an effective history of Berlin work must consider it in terms of its dispersal. We cannot be satisfied that Berlin work is celebrated in one instance and castigated the next, but must look to the various operations

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[106] Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 117.
[107] Anonymous source cited in Therle Hughes, *English Domestic Needlework 1660-1860* (London: Abbey Fine Arts, 1961), 109-10.

that have given it some kind of social intelligibility. We can notice here that although Proctor has pointed out the success of Berlin work at the Great Exhibition of 1851, she does not reflect on its classification as "Industrial Work." Indeed, this idea of a new industrial age would seem to have nothing to do with the domestic activities of women and we could say that it is the promoters of art needlework who perhaps best appreciated the limits of Berlin work as a *industrial* art, even if only indirectly.

To take the Queen's Carpet as an example, we notice that this curious object, classified as industrial work, was exhibited at the Society of Arts in 1850. It had been worked by the Lady Mayoress and 150 gentlewomen, identified as "ladies" at that time, and was overseen by Francis Fuller, chairman of the committee responsible for presenting the work to the Queen. In 1851, the *Art Journal* reported that this major work displayed "a large amount of industrial perseverance."[108] Contemporaneous accounts provide us with some indications of how it was perceived at the time and how it occupied an indeterminate zone between the liberal and mechanical arts. The official catalogue from the Exhibition describes it thus:

> LADY MAYORESS (1850), and 150 LADIES of GREAT BRITAIN the executants. The design by John W. Papworth, Esq., Great Marlborough Street; the patterns painted by, and the work executed under the superintendence of, W.B. Simpson, West Strand. A Berlin wool carpet, 30 feet long and 20 feet wide, worked in detached squares, which have been subsequently joined together to form the complete design. An illustration of the branch of manufacture which may afford to its executants a recompense more liberal than they can obtain in most other sorts of needlework. This manufacture may also apply to the entire decoration of a room, as tapestry, furniture &c. The initials of the executants form the ornament of the outside border. The whole design is connected by wreaths or bands of leaves and foliage, the centre group representing the store from whence they have been distributed. Part of the patterns of the Berlin wool carpet exhibited by Her Majesty. The whole design is painted in one piece as a picture; on being subdivided the squares have the thread lines printed upon them. By this

[108] Cited in Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 117.

> arrangement the setting out pattern or second painting on squared paper from a picture first made is rendered unnecessary.[109]

This official description indicates that the pattern for this carpet was made differently from those normally produced for resale. This particular piece would have been a unique "manufactured" work. The June 28 issue of the *Illustrated Exhibitor* reported at the time,

> Just over the Crystal Fountain, in the left hand north gallery, looking from the south transept, will be discovered the specimen of needlework known as the LADIES CARPET. In the early part of last year a number of ladies thought proper to execute a carpet in needlework, as a specimen of the profitable employment of their leisure hours. They were assisted in their labours by a small committee of gentlemen, who, with Mr. Papworth, the architect, produced a most beautiful design. The carpet was exhibited at the rooms of the Society of Arts, when the ladies who had assembled to inspect the work unanimously pronounced it to be worthy of presentation to Her Majesty.[110]

The catalogue also mentions that the carpets exhibited by the Queen were placed overhanging the corner near the Transept of the North Central Gallery, a prominent placement that could not have been missed by visitors. The Queen's Carpet would have been placed alongside colourful loom-woven and machine-made carpets, contrasting with the bright ceilings of the Crystal Palace.[111] The machine-made carpets that were hung from the girders were seen to have an equally rich effect with the added virtue of being lower in production costs. One of these, the first of its kind, was made with the use of

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[109] By Authority of the Royal Commission, *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations: Official Description and Illustrated Catalogue* (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), 573.
[110] *The Illustrated Exhibition, A Tribute to the World's Industrial Jubilee; Comprising Sketches, by Pen and Pencil, of the Principal Objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations* (London: John Cassell, 1851), 73.
[111] *The Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition; an Historical Account of the Building, together with a Descriptive Synopsis of its contents* (London: H.G. Clarke and Co, 1851), 79.

charts very similar to the kinds of charts used for Berlin work, but was manufactured.[112] A contemporary account, written by a "foreigner," reflects on the propensity of the English for efficiency: "If the English give us lessons in industry, they may on their part, learn from us to assign to art, properly speaking, a higher position."[113] Yet England, the centre of the world's manufacturing, no doubt embraced Berlin work precisely because it advanced taste and promoted the beautiful at the same time as it offered the benefits of industry. By reducing Berlin work to either art or industry, commentators fail to recognize both its character and the significance of its historical emergence. As an example of this, Lilo Markrich and Heinz Edgar Kiewe argue incorrectly that Berlin work was popular because it offered a dramatic relief to the somber mood created by the effects of industry. They write:

> The bright, easily done Berlin work encouraged self-expression when mechanization was smothering it, gave people a way of asserting their individuality when science was demanding productive units, and carried a whiff of nostalgia when industry was insisting on progress and newness.[114]

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[112] This carpet was known as the Crossley Patent Mosaic Berlin Work, or Patent Wool Mosaic Carpet, exhibited by Messrs Crossley. See John Timbs, *The Year-Book of Facts in the Great Exhibition of 1851: Its Origin and Progress, Constructive Details of the Building, The Most Remarkable Articles and Objects Exhibited, Etc.* (London: David Bogue, 1851), 267-9. For more on this subject, see John C. Fairbairn, *The Crossley "Mosaics"* (Halifax: Bankfield Museum, 1932) and R.A. Innes, *Crossley Mosaics* (Halifax: Calderdale Museums, 1974).

[113] Cited in John Tallis, *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851; Illustrated by Beautiful Steel Engravings, from Original Drawings and Daguerreotypes, by Beard, Mayall, Etc, Etc., Volume 1* (London: John Tallis and Co., 1852), 160.

[114] Lilo Markrich and Heinz Edgar Kiewe, *Victorian Fancywork: Nineteenth-Century Needlepoint Patterns and Designs* (London: Pitman Publishing, 1975), 2. Joan Edwards makes the interesting observation that the popularity of Berlin work caused textile manufacturers to produce designs for printed cottons in imitation of the new embroidery patterns. In Edwards, *The First of Joan Edwards' Small Book on the History of Embroidery*, no page numbers.

Although they are writing in the 1970s and have the benefit of social history methods of analysis, these authors could not be more wrong. Insofar as they wish to maintain liberal humanist conceptions of creativity, they are unable to see hand-made Berlin work as anything other than pre-industrial. Their nostalgic view of the past is not simply inaccurate; rather, it displays the desire for a kind of counter-cultural notion of traditional practices.

5.24 John Crossley & Son of Halifax, *Edward VII as Prince of Wales*, c.1851-60. Wool on linen, 81.3 x 61 cm. Example of Crossley "Mosaics" produced in the years 1850-1869. It is likely that this mosaic design was produced for the 1851 Great Exhibition.

Two more texts conclude this study of the reception of Berlin work in the twentieth century. Geoffrey Warren's 1976 book on Victorian and Edwardian needlecraft serves a similar purpose as Morris' and Proctor's books in that it is informed by the then current revival of needlework as well as the collecting of specimens produced in the years 1830 to 1910.[115] While presenting a rich social history of the lives of women at this time, Warren's book is also written for "the needlewoman of today" and includes stitching techniques that would be of interest to the practitioner. A first chapter on "'good' and 'bad' taste," addresses the aesthetic concerns of Warren's book. It states that most of what was shown at the 1851 Exhibition had nothing new to offer in terms of taste, though as far as inventions were concerned, there was plenty.[116] The tendency of the Victorians, according to Warren, citing Owen Jones's 1858 *Grammar of Ornament*, was to be content with copying.[117] This was nowhere more evident, he says, than in the 'Tapestry, Floor-Cloths, Lace and Embroidery' section of the Great Exhibition, with its many Berlin works. With these, he writes, the exhibitors would seem to have been under the impression that what was important was the size and the number of years required to make a piece of work.[118] From here he shifts almost immediately to the critic John Ruskin and the latter's championing of the Pre-Raphaelites. Ruskin, Warren says, taught working men to not rely on the machine. He writes: "[Ruskin] ignored the fact that most people do not have it in them to be creative and are only too glad to rely on this gift in

[115] Geoffrey Warren, *A Stitch In Time: Victorian and Edwardian Needlecraft* (London: David & Charles, 1976).
[116] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 13.
[117] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 13.
[118] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 13-14.

others, and that the machine was there to stay."[119] Warren's account, therefore, in a few economic lines, takes a very different position from Morris and Proctor, and reaches for the heights of the Art Nouveau Movement, for which the Arts and Crafts were merely a starting point. What is important about Art Nouveau, with all of its exclusivity, is its "purity of line," "fitness of purpose" and "unity of design" that could nowhere be found in 1851, where the works were defined by the "helter-skelter" and "haphazard mixing" of Classic, Gothic, Morresque, and "'every other excellence hitherto attained'".[120] Warren, who himself was a magazine editor, ad agency designer, and antiques seller, therefore wishes to set up the highest design standards possible for the reception of needlecrafts. A section on Berlin work covers the usual information drawn from Stone, Lambert, Owen, Merrifield and Lowes, reiterating what Louise Karr has referred to as the "melancholy lay" of patience, ability and discrimination.[121]

Beyond what it has to say about Berlin work, Warren's book offers us an opportunity to consider the limits of his kind of social history writing. The enormous productivity of the industrial revolution had produced, he says, "an unprecedentedly large class of well-off women with too much time on their hands".[122] He cites an 1837 account by Mrs John Sandford, which argues that women, the "beautiful" sex, were incapable of the "sublime" strength of originality. In her unpublished novel of 1852, *Cassandra*, Florence Nightingale depicted the dreariness of the life to which Victorian women had been consigned, "sitting around a little table in the drawing-room, looking at prints, doing

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[119] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 14.
[120] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 13, 15.
[121] Louise Karr, "Berlin Wool Work," (1927) in *Needlework: An Historical Survey*, ed. Betty Ring (New York: Antiques Magazine Library, 1975), 43.
[122] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 16.

worsted work, and reading little books."[123] Not all Victorian women could be Florence Nightingales, Warren tells us.[124] Of course not every Victorian woman was Florence Nightingale and even Nightingale herself had to become who she was. The point is that any Victorian woman *could* have become like her but not all *did*. The mystique of a talented artist here defies explanation. Warren settles this dilemma once again by suggesting that for some women, those with "little or no talent," and who could barely think for themselves, this otherwise dreary existence was a suitable means of occupying their time.[125] Oddly enough, at the moment of feminist and counter-cultural interest in needlework of all sorts, Warren's writing upholds a cultural conservatism in which qualities of artistic talent and ability are the measure of human value. Even though this standard is not ostensibly attached to class, as he distinguishes the dull bourgeois woman from the "mass of females who had to *earn* their living," it illuminates the contradictions of a capitalist ideology that is unable to provide a rigorous socially and economically-based analysis of creativity, taste and aesthetic value.[126] It assumes that qualities and virtues that are found elsewhere than in aesthetic ideology have no intrinsic value. Moreover, it glosses over the social function of the relation between surplus value, produced by all of those employed in factories and workshops, men and women, and the leisure time that was awarded middle-class ladies.

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[123] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 16-17.
[124] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 17.
[125] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 17.
[126] Warren, *A Stitch In Time*, 17. According to Pierre Bourdieu, "The 'charismatic' ideology which is the ultimate basis of belief in the value of a work of art and which is therefore the basis of functioning of the field of production and circulation of cultural commodities, is undoubtedly the main obstacle to a rigorous science of the production of the value of cultural goods." See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 76.

While Warren's writing is premised on the discrepancy between aesthetic and political ideology, it does not draw critical connections between them, but leaves them in their respective registers. Unfortunately, this kind of conservatism also prevents him from making certain salient observations about his subject matter. It is no doubt because Victorians understood (if perhaps only unconsciously) the privileges they were awarded that modest women kept themselves busy with socially sanctioned activities, of which Berlin needlework was one. No wonder then that mid-nineteenth-century accounts of Berlin work patterns are often anxious to note that this market had the added benefit of giving employment to thousands of young women. The cultural activity of Berlin work therefore mediated the political terms and the seemingly intractable reality of social inequality. The "industrial aesthetic," as I have defined it, should therefore not only be understood in terms of enlightenment culture and product innovation, but should be seen as an industrial age expression of the social relations of production. This relates not only to the division of labour involved between the making of charts and the execution of canvases, but in the division of labour that created the middle class as such.

The last book I will examine in this series of twentieth-century accounts of Berlin work is Rozsika Parker's 1984 text *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. Before this book's appearance, Parker had co-authored with Griselda Pollock *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, a groundbreaking book in the field of feminist art theory.[127] Written in the context of the women's liberation movement, *Old Mistresses* examines the exclusion of women from art and literature and the misrepresentation of women through stereotypes of femininity. According to Deborah Cherry, the purpose of

[127] Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

Old Mistresses was to deconstruct conventional art history and, as an aspect of the women's liberation movement, replace it with a radical, feminist history of art.[128] This involved not only studying the lives of women and women artists, but also the mechanisms of modern art history, which work ideologically to limit what can and cannot be discussed in terms of cultural production.[129] *The Subversive Stitch* carried forward feminist art theory with the argument that the creation of femininity and ideals of feminine behaviour have been, from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, tied to the history of embroidery. "To know the history of embroidery," Parker writes, "is to know the history of women."[130] Unlike those books from the 1960s and 70s that we have examined so far, Parker's writing is highly academic and highly politicized.[131] It is not written for hobbyists interested in needlecraft or for collectors and auctioneers, but for those in the feminist movement who are familiar with developments in contemporary art.

The book's concluding chapter, titled "A Naturally Revolutionary Art?," mentions not only embroidery organizations like The Royal School of Needlework and craft co-operatives like The Textile Studio and the New Embroidery Movement, but also textile departments in art schools like Goldsmiths' College. This chapter places an 1858 sampler in the same context as a pair of embroidered jeans from 1970 and Judy

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[128] Deborah Cherry, "Feminist Interventions: Feminist Imperatives," *Art History* 5:4 (December 1982): 501. Parker joined the feminist magazine *Spare Rib* in 1972. This lets us know that she had been interested in developments in feminist art and theory for more than a decade before writing *The Subversive Stitch*.

[129] Griselda Pollock, *Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), 1.

[130] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, vi.

[131] A quick glance at the notes reveals the names of many critical theorists, including Simone de Beauvoir, Juliet Mitchell, Gayle Rubin, Kate Millett, Arnold Hauser, Mary Daly, Marina Warner, Linda Nochlin, Raymond Williams, Sheila Rowbotham, and Richard Sennett.

Chicago's *The Dinner Party* of 1979. As examples of her idea of subversive stitchery, Parker shows an embroidered runner, made by Beryl Weaver in 1978 and shown in the feminist magazine *Spare Rib*, alongside a 1978 sampler by Kate Walker that was shown in the exhibition *Feministo*. Both of these works use scripto-visual strategies to present feminist slogans. The former depicts a female figure with the caption "she's getting stronger and angrier all the time" and the latter reads: "wife is a four letter word." These works are presented as "rebellious gestures against a hierarchical, puritanical, masculine establishment."[132] The last chapter concludes with the statement:

> For women today, the contradictory and complex history of embroidery is important because it reveals that definitions of sexual difference, and the definitions of art and artist so weighted against women, are not fixed. They have shifted over the centuries, and they can be transformed in the future.[133]

In this sense, Parker applies a Marxist materialist strategy to gender ideology. She looks at art history as a system of knowledge that has conferred authority to a delimited set of texts, objects and subjects, and that has worked to naturalize aesthetic values into models of transhistorical meaning.

The materialist method that is implicit in the book is made evident in the first chapter, which states that feminism looks to psychoanalysis and Marxism to provide accounts of how gender constructs are produced historically. The idea that boys should be directed to carpentry and girls to needlework, which would have been evident in schools at the time that Parker's book was written, is taken as an indication of the way gender ideology is institutionalized through a distinction of activities that are underwritten by social assumptions. Embroidery evokes the home, family and femininity, she argues, in a

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[132] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 204.
[133] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 215.

manner that sanctions a rigid and oppressive division of labour.[134] Although the association of femininity with craft is not immutable, she says, to consider it a high art form might simply affirm a hierarchical system of value rather than deconstructing it.[135]

The crux of Parker's analysis, inasmuch as it tells us something about Berlin work, relates to what she says about the association of embroidery with containment and submission. Oppression, she argues, is a key to understanding women's relation to art.[136] She writes:

> Embroidery has provided a source of pleasure and power for women, while being indissolubly linked to their powerlessness. Paradoxically, while embroidery was employed to inculcate femininity in women, it also enabled them to negotiate the constraints of femininity. Observing the covert ways embroidery has provided a source of support and satisfaction for women leads us out of the impasse created by outright condemnation or uncritical celebration of the art.[137]

The subject matter of a woman's embroidery during the nineteenth century, she argues, was an important means for her to affirm her femininity. This idea forms the background to the book's seventh chapter on "Femininity as Feeling." Berlin work is mentioned on four occasions in this chapter. In a discussion on the link between love, comfort and punitive moralism, the guilt feelings that nineteenth-century women might have in the pleasure that they took in making embroideries are said to have been alleviated by the assurance that embroideries were useful and necessary. Embroidery therefore fulfilled the requirements of a feminine mystique, and women could only blame themselves if they failed to live up to its ideals. Consequently, and almost as an indication that women

[134] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 3.
[135] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 5.
[136] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 11.
[137] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 11.

were overcompensating for unconscious anxieties, Parker mentions that Berlin wool work was spread to almost every corner of the Victorian household:

> over curtains, portières, pianos, anti-macassars, mantlepieces, tables, chairs, stools, screens, books, etc, providing a padding against the world outside, and emphasizing how different were conditions inside where the lady of the house possessed all the virtues of domestic femininity.[138]

Not only did every surface have to be covered, she says, but this had to be done with taste, which often implied proper subject matter, from the Royal Family to idealizations of country life and emphatic sentimentality. The last of these is connected to feeling, a sensibility that demonstrated empathy and the ability to sympathize with others. Parker mentions historical scenes like *Mary Queen of Scots mourning over the Dying Douglas at the Battle of Langside* and *Charles I Bidding Farewell to his Family* as examples of the suffering of humanity that corresponded to the feminine virtue of moral sensibility. Obedience, piety, feelings of duty towards a distant authoritarian male, could all be conveyed not only through the subjects of Berlin works, but through the painstaking activity itself. "To toil for those we love," wrote Mrs Warren and Mrs Pullan in their 1885 *Treasures of Needlework*, "can never be a dull or painful task to a woman, even if the toil be great."[139] Parker concludes her few remarks on Berlin work with a presentation of Morrall's poem, *The Husband's Complaint*. She also includes in her analysis, the wife's answer, which concludes with the lines:

> I knit some lamb's wool stockings, and you kicked up such a rout
> And asked how soon my ladyship was going to have the gout!
> Enough of banter; yet believe one word before we part –
> The rest perhaps was fable; but this is from the heart, –
> The loving wife, right cheerfully obeys her husband still

[138] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 158.
[139] Warren and Pullan cited in Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 170.

And will ever lay aside her frame to meet his lordly will.[140]

Parker resolves the contradictions of gender ideology as it applied to needlework by focusing on the field of art. The figure of William Morris is brought in almost as a *deus ex machina* insofar as the ideas of the Arts and Crafts Movement coincided with those the Suffrage Movement. From the 1840s to the 1880s Morris actively sought to break down both sexual and class divisions of labour and to make art more democratically available. A critic of industrialization and machine manufacture, Morris promoted the development of countryside workshops that taught craft skills.[141] Domestic arts should be in the hands of everyone, he thought, and women were to have the same educational opportunities as men. Parker writes:

> Once women began to push out the boundaries of Victorian femininity, the encouragement given to embroidery by the Arts and Crafts Movement was historically responsible for profound changes within the practice of embroidery. Initially, however, all the movement did was to promote a new style of needlework.[142]

Morris' designs, Parker seems to believe, were far more arduous than Berlin wool patterns. Consequently, she says, the Royal School of Needlework and the model of art needlework presented what it did, not as *work*, but as "simply the fulfillment of the vocation of femininity."[143]

While Parker's text has the advantage of opening the discussion of Berlin work to an analysis of gender oppression, it tends to avoid a number of broader considerations. The period in which Berlin work came into existence as one of the most popular cultural

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[140] M.T. Morrall, *A History of Needlemaking* (1852), cited in Molly Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work* (1972), cited in Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 173.
[141] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 179.
[142] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 180.
[143] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 185.

practices is the period of bourgeois consolidation in which culture was greatly shaped by industrialization. Berlin patterns replaced the association of artistic creation with divine attributes and with birthright, and associated it with education, enlightenment, learning and technical know-how. If women makers of Berlin wool canvases could be said to be performing femininity, they could also be said to be performing a new definition of art in which culture was positively linked to the creation of new commodities. From the perspectives of psychoanalysis and the sociology of culture, we could of course say that culture operates a number of misrecognitions and disavowals. With commodity fetishism, as Marx explained in *Capital*, it is labour that disappears. In this case the commodity fetishism of Berlin wool work expropriates and subsumes both the labour of the chart makers as well as the inspired labour of the individual "genius" artist. What art needlework introduced in the split between the liberal and mechanical arts was a struggle over the question of skill. It took skill out of the hands of manufacturers and industrialists and sought to return it to the individual, thereby renewing a pre-industrial and pre-capitalist notion of creative labour. Berlin work, to the extent that it brought art and industry together, confounded the rules of individual creation, giving practitioners a new means to access the most sublime reaches of culture.

Parker's book, in contrast to many of the others that we have examined, makes the struggle over the liberal arts its focus. In contrast to Geoffrey Warren, who links aesthetics with the cultural authority of taste and, superficially, with capitalist exchange, Parker approaches aesthetics in terms of ideology. To think of art in this way comes very close to the methods of genealogy, which is concerned with systems of power and knowledge. In this regard, the meanings of art, including the contemporary institutional

protocols surrounding the production and study of culture, must be understood as instruments of domination. There are therefore no social spaces or relations that escape the reach of genealogy. In this chapter I have revisited the extant English-language literature on Berlin work. I have presented this material in terms of a distinction between nineteenth and twentieth century sources and suggested that these correspond roughly to the status of Berlin work in terms of official and submerged knowledge. This review of written sources has allowed us to appreciate the ways in which questions I described earlier, having to do with copying, originality, definitions of the artist, systematization and an industrial aesthetic, figure across time. There are no significant twenty-first century accounts of Berlin work – that is, other than this study – that would allow us to consider how Berlin work's shift from official to submerged knowledge can be thought of in the present. In the conclusion that follows, I return to the question of my own work of research-creation and consider my activity, understood in terms of genealogy, in comparison with the use of needlepoint by two other contemporary artists. The knowledge that has been presented in the last four chapters allows my work to figure not only as a new, written source of information about Berlin work, but also as a distinct strategy for a contemporary cultural practice that makes use of needlepoint.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has been concerned with the critical history of pictorial needlepoint embroidery as a popular art form that engages historical issues around creativity, industry and the social functions of art. As a feature of my art practice, the research that has been undertaken has advanced with the idea of genealogy as a history of errors. Foucault's writings on genealogy argue that we are the inheritors of the "errors" of previous generations. Errors figure in his work very specifically in terms of historical descent, where the status of statements, or facts, change over time. The term error therefore refers to the dispersal of meaning through the play of social forces. Foucault also argues that a history of errors gives priority to the overlooked. Needlepoint in this regard figures twice in any history of embroidery, on the one hand, because the practice of needlepoint has itself become a submerged practice – has been considered a "mistaken" art, out of place and unoriginal – and on the other, because what has been written about needlepoint, in terms of its emergence in the nineteenth century, presents a series of displacements of what can and perhaps should be known about it. However, Foucauldian genealogy, as a history of errors, does not lead us to consider that the documents of the past are entirely insufficient, that they could be corrected through the unearthing of more historical details, but rather that we are the inheritors of these documents, which have produced new truths, new uses of the past, and new sites of disagreement.

In the second chapter of this thesis I provided some historical context for the emergence of needlepainting as the source of inspiration for Berlin work. The fact that needlepainting is based in the skillful copying of source material in thread, usually paintings, lends this practice a complicated place in the history of art. As we have seen,

the development of professional art institutions like the Royal Academy had mostly negative results for elite amateur practices, for those artists whose work was based on practices of copying, and also for women artists, whose membership was highly selective and for the most part prohibited. An artist like Mary Linwood and a practice like needlepainting could nevertheless achieve a high level of success and recognition. We can notice this for instance in two documents from the late 1820s. The first of these is an entry concerning the work of Linwood written by the Benedictine monks Sholto and Reuben Percy. Celebrating the genius of Linwood, they write:

> Miss Linwood has awaked from its long sleep, the art which gave birth to painting; and the needle, in her hands, has become a formidable rival to the pencil. She has realized those splendid wonders that were recorded by Homer, and other Greek and Latin poets, "when purpled hangings clothed the palace walls." For although various charming specimens of needlework have been produced by some of her predecessors, yet to Miss Linwood was reserved the pre-eminent distinction of executing an entire collection, which, from its magnitude and uncommon excellence, is a monument of her genius, industry, and perseverance, surpassing in extent the fabled labours of Penelope, at her procrastinated web.[1]

The text is of course given to all of the hyperbole that could be mustered in this Romantic era translation of the battle between ancients and moderns, with Linwood here coming out ahead of the mythic Penelope. A second text is a letter written by Mary Linwood herself in 1829 to a Mr Beach. She writes:

> Sir, I understand you are to be in Leicester Sqr on Friday Morn'g come early – and bring your Paints with you, I've brought the Landscape for a little more force to be given – you will easily do it when I've pointed it out – do not fail to bring your paints. I have spoken to several respect'g you, and wish to communicate with you – I will also introduce you to Mr Hilton. Do not fail coming – and tell your Wife not to wait dinner we can give you some thing to eat. Yours M Linwood. Wednesday 8th July 1829, Leicester Sqr.[2]

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[1] Sholto and Reuben Percy, "Miss Linwood," in *Percy Anecdotes. Original and Select. By Sholto and Reuben Percy, Brothers of the Benedictine Monastery, Mont Berger, Volume XX: Woman and Domestic Life* (London: J. Cumberland, 1826), 159.
[2] Letter from Mary Linwood to Mr Beach, July 8, 1829. Collection of the author.

The letter demonstrates Linwood's authority and artistic skill. It gives us some sense of a world of social and peer evaluation and the fact that Linwood had spoken to others about Beach's artwork. The London address, from which the letter was sent, shows that she had connections in this city, though she lived in Leicester. Leicester Square, where they were to meet, and which is in London, established the site of her exhibition as a meeting place for artists. Clearly this document demonstrates what Foucault refers to as "local memories" or "unofficial knowledge" insofar as Linwood is not remembered by official art histories as a significant artist.

The question for effective history is indeed how such everyday knowledge relates to established regimes of thought.[3] In this context my account is concerned with how it is that subjugated knowledges have been historically interpreted. Just as needlepoint does not have a timeless essence, historical themes like the question of copying have their own historicity. Such themes are not repeated in different accounts, they are fragmented and dispersed; secondary sources become primary sources, revealing their own internal limits and contradictions. Each new account does not complete the picture, but transforms it. For instance, whereas copies were considered in the eighteenth century to be essential elements in a liberal culture that was fascinated with classical antiquity, it was simultaneously connected to the promotion of product innovation as a feature of mercantile capitalism. Copying in this regard becomes a key element in the development of modern amateur practices like Berlin work. Certainly, this commercialization of cultural practice eventually became anathema to the modern discourse of aesthetic

[3] Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in Michael Kelly, ed. *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994), 20.

autonomy, but such a reversal erases the many other paths along which Berlin work persevered. In the chapter on the development of an industrial aesthetic, I have described some of the ways in which the systematization of image production in the nineteenth century became a matter of cultural valorization. This represents a dramatic transformation of the culture of the copy from an enlightenment context to that of the industrial revolution.[4] It is significant that all of the source material that is examined in the last chapter has overlooked the systematization of copying that takes place in Berlin work. Certainly, with regard to twentieth-century sources, much of this is due to the development of modernist aesthetics. However, one might have expected these issues to come to the surface in the 1960s and 70s, with the introduction of social history methodologies, or even in relation to the Marxist concerns of a writer like Rozsika Parker. What we find with the latter, however, is an almost exclusive concern with the ideology of femininity. In the 2010 edition of *The Subversive Stitch*, Parker brings her book up to date by considering what embroidery might mean to us in the twenty-first century. My exploration of Berlin work would be limited if I was to focus exclusively, as she does, on the association of embroidery with femininity. There is, however, as she notes in the new introduction to her book, a tendency within contemporary work to use "gloriously old fashioned" forms of embroidery and to display them in professional settings.[5] This brings us, at the conclusion of the of the fifth chapter, back to question of contemporary art and to the significance of needlepoint within my own work.

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[4] For a study of the development of the culture of the copy in its nineteenth and twentieth-century contexts, see Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimilies* (New York: Zone Books, 1996).
[5] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: IB Taurus, 2010), xvi.

Many of the uses of needlework in today's postmodern institutions recuperate "domestic craft" with little consideration of its complex histories. A good example of such work, mentioned indirectly in Parker's 2010 introduction, is Maria E. Piñeres' needlepoint studies of celebrities, friends and vintage pornography.[6] As work concerned with contemporary culture, it makes use of needlepoint as a medium that, because of its popularity, echoes the status of the figures represented. Needlepoint is enlisted for the kitsch value it has had since at least the postwar period. It is therefore prized as submerged knowledge, a medium that does not know itself. Rather than an enlightenment product with a complex and contradictory history, needlepoint is favoured for its limited semiotic register, as work that connotes a flattening of intellectual and cultural relevance which itself might prove to be interesting as a comment on contemporary society, much like an Andy Warhol image of Marilyn Monroe. What is interesting about this new type of work, if we think of it in relation to the postwar reception of Berlin work, is that it attempts to do something on the intellectual level of Rozsika Parker, but it does so on the terms of someone like Geoffrey Warren, providing an ersatz aesthetic rather than a critique of the social structure of artistic creativity and of its institutional protocols, state regulation and market manipulation.[7] The catalogue that presents Piñeres' needlepoints states that this sort of work "explore[s] the phenomenal

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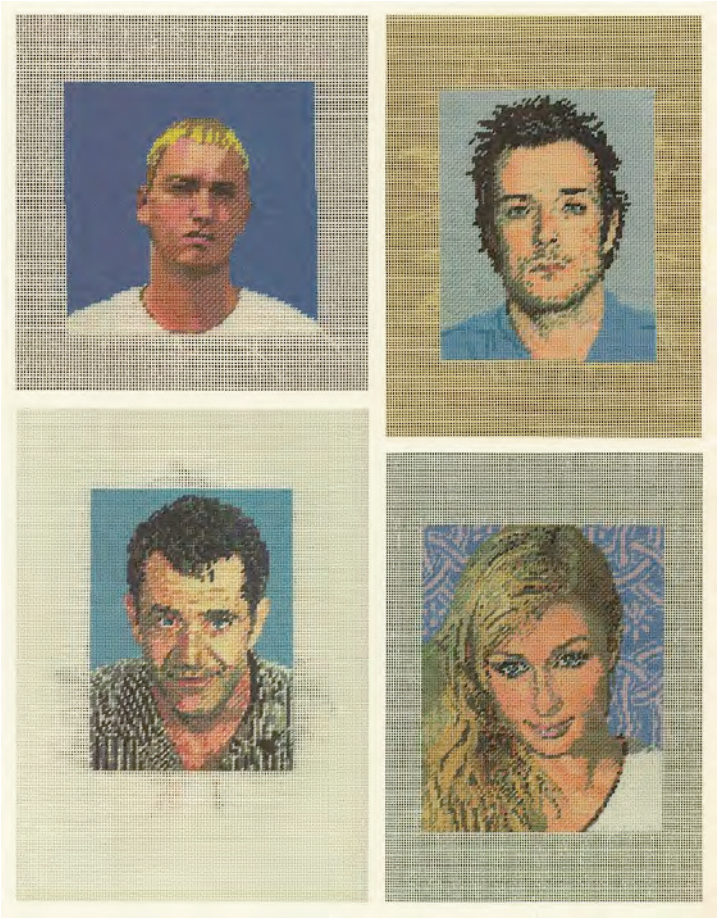
[6] Parker mentions the exhibition, *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery*, from which I draw this example of work.

[7] Parker adds in her new introduction that unlike contemporary enterprise culture, second wave feminism wished to transform the very structures of art practice as "the only way to improve things for women." The main exception to this in her account is "craftivism," a combination of craft as art and activism. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 2010 edition, xvi-xvii. On the subject of craftivism, see Anthea Black and Nicole Burisch, "Craft Hard, Die Free: Radical Curatorial Strategies for Craftivism in Unruly Contexts," in *The Craft Reader*, ed. Glenn Adamson (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 609-619.

return of materials and process in the sphere of contemporary art... [and] celebrates the work of the artist's hand in the twenty-first century."[8] In this case the intellectual sources of such postmodern recuperation are by and large ignored. Embroidery techniques can thus be placed alongside painting and other traditional materials as yet another means of motivating the return to representation.



6.1 Maria E. Piñeres, *Eminem Mug Shot* (2004), *Scott Weiland* (2005), *Mel Gibson* (2006) and *Paris Hilton* (2007). Hand-embroidered cotton thread on paper. From the catalogue of the exhibition *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery*, Museum of Arts & Design, New York, November 8, 2007-March 9, 2008.

[8] Holly Hotchner cited in David Revere McFadden, *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery* (New York: Museum of Arts & Design, 2007), 6. The exhibition *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery* was shown at and curated by the Museum of Arts & Design, New York, which also presented "Radical Lace & Subversive Knitting" in 2006-2007.

My study of Berlin work, in contrast, attempts to open a window on a widespread practice that has hitherto escaped serious analysis. A genealogical approach has provided us with a perspective that resists a strictly aesthetic reception of Berlin work and that hopefully has allowed for a deeper understanding of our modernity. Unfortunately, the recuperation of needlepoint that we find in work like that made by Piñeres takes place in terms of postmodern re-semanticization and aestheticization. Do such hand-made works challenge our view of modernism and postmodernism, or do they merely reproduce received ideas? Alternately, what kind of work would be capable of displacing the comfortable, nostalgic views of the past that we sometimes create for ourselves?

Any examination of the use of embroidery practices in contemporary art would have to look at the ways artists are trained and the ways that their work circulates in the various institutions that form the field of cultural production. From the point of view of the division between the liberal and mechanical arts, if such a distinction can still today be maintained, there is no doubt that the skill that is to be exhibited by today's artist is the practice of theory. Whether the application of theoretical concepts in today's university can still be understood as a liberal art is not a matter that can be easily determined. Today's institutionalization of culture requires that contemporary artists master a high level of theoretical and academic knowledge, as is evident especially in the creation of new PhD programs in visual art. The successful artist today is often the artist who has learned to use theory to convert everyday cultural forms into high-end cultural products. Cultural authority, in this regard, is today exercised less in terms of idealist notions of

taste, than it is in terms of institutional processes in which, according to David Tomas, human and intellectual raw materials are transformed into viable products.[9]

As an example of the institutional transformation of art, we can consider the use of needlepoint in the work of Mary Smull. Smull is a Philadelphia-based artist who received her MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art (Michigan) in 2009 and who has since then taught in several universities, including the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. According to her website, she works with needlepoint as a way to expose attitudes towards labour and to explore the "complex relationship between art history and domestic craft."[10] Besides her series of "Conceptual Needlepoints," which examine the rules that govern the application of coloured yarns, and her "Sol LeWitt Series," which makes use of jpg images of his work as patterns, Smull seems to be most recognized for her series titled "(Un)finished Needlepoint." For these works, she says, she collects unfinished needlepoint projects from electronic auction sites, thrift stores and rummage sales. She finishes these unfinished works by using only white yarn, concluding the work "structurally, but not visually." She writes, "The original anonymous maker's accomplishment (or lack thereof) is thus preserved; the labour they invested is reclaimed." Through such an act of reclamation, Smull's work would appear to correspond to Ricia Chansky's idea of the "third-wave feminist." According to Chansky, "Reclamation in this arena does not simply recreate these traditional art forms but rather

[9] David Tomas, "Artist: Identity in Mutation," in *Escape Velocity: Alternative Prototype for Playing the Knowledge Game* (Montreal: Wedge Publications, 2012), 1.
[10] See Mary Smull's website. Accessed August 26, 2012. http://www.marysmull.com/.

uses historically undervalued means of artistic expression to discuss very contemporary issues in fresh new ways."[11]

6.2 Mary Smull, *Blue Boy*, 2008. 50.8 x 35.6 cm. Example of Smull's (Un)finished Needlepoint.

[11] Ricia A. Chansky, "A Stitch in Time: Third-Wave Feminist Reclamation of Needled Imagery," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 43:4 (2010): 682.

Smull's (Un)finished Needlepoints began when her aging grandmother gave her a partially unfinished tablecloth that was started in the 1960s but never completed. From there, she decided to focus on needlepoints, which she began to buy through eBay in 2008.[12] The idea of rescuing these works from their state of incompletion led Smull to establish in 2009 the Society for the Prevention of Unfinished Needlepoint (SPUN). The creation of SPUN has dramatically transformed Smull's studio work into a multilayered project that can be described in various ways as community art, relational art, collaborative art and mockstitution. The SPUN website adopts the kind of humanitarian language that is used by non-governmental organizations. For instance, the statement on "Who We Are" describes SPUN as a "textile welfare organization" whose goal is to "eliminate the worldwide phenomenon of unfinished needlepoint." Their mandate is to "fully complete" all needlepoint projects and so they call on members to contribute funds that will assist in this worldwide endeavour. Sales of finished works are to aid with this goal. Through the SPUN website, the Society coordinates members' activities and expects to some day present the needlepoints' stories as well as "before" and "after" images in their online archive. Through an extensive series of conceptual means, Smull has transformed her needlepoint works not only into collective products, but into a branding exercise. For instance, a SPUN kiosk was set up at the Philadelphia Institute for Contemporary Art on May 7, 2011, complete with banners showing the SPUN logo, t-shirts, tote bags and buttons. People were asked to become members and to add a few stitches of white yarn to some of the unfinished needlepoint projects available on hand. Smull also led a needlepoint workshop at the Philadelphia Museum of Art on June 23 of

[12] See "History" on the SPUN website, accessed August 26, 2012. http://www.unfinishedneedlepoint.org/.

2012. The public was invited to "drop in and add a few stitches to an unfinished needlepoint," or to bring in other kinds of unfinished projects.[13]

6.3 SPUN kiosk at the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art, May 7, 2011.

The critical reception of this work, if one could call it that, is typical of a good deal of writing on contemporary reclamations of "traditional" forms like needlepoint. Issues of labour, cultural value, and arts hierarchies are mentioned but rarely anything of note is said about them. Writing for the webzine *ducts.org*, Cindy Stockton Moore suggests that participants who collaborated with Smull at the ICA, found themselves "getting to know

[13] See "SPUN NEWS!!!" and "SPUN comes to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, June 23, 2012!" Available at www.unfinishedneedlepoint.org

a little more about the original maker through their missteps and omissions."[14] However, she mentions that most volunteers walked away after twenty minutes, leaving the bulk of the work to Smull herself. The value of the reclamation project, she suggests, is that there is no hierarchy between the different contributions to the finished object and that this raises "important questions about individual and collective identities," forming "cross-generational collaboration."[15] Such assertions, like the claim to horizontality, are certainly consistent with contemporary art discourse and the ideals of collaborative art. In this particular case, however, they function more in terms of normative statements than in terms of social outcome. The hierarchies exist at the institutional level, and as Tomas would have us consider, the politics of Smull's work are very much in keeping with contemporary theoretical discussions, which do not necessarily translate to participants. What Smull is therefore exchanging is not knowledge about needlepoint, but an experience that is inscribed within the expanded parameters of contemporary art practice. In this case, needlepoint acts as a kind of vanishing mediator and is practically insignificant. Another reviewer, Emily Zilber, states in *Fiberarts* magazine that SPUN's "unorthodox collaborative objects" "present fundamentally fragmented narratives," caught as the works are between "elective leisure activities" and "reminders of work to be done."[16] The sense of guilty discomfort that is hypothetically provoked by the unfinished projects, she adds, allows Smull to explore the "practical and emotional complexities

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[14] Cindy Stockton Moore, "Saving Stitches: The Society for the Prevention of Unfinished Needlepoint," *ducts.org* 27 (Summer 2011), accessed August 26, 2012. Available at http://www.ducts.org/content/saving-stitches-the-society-for-the-prevention-of-unfinished-needlepoint/.
[15] Moore, "Saving Stitches."
[16] Emily Zilber, "Mary Smull: Selective Memory," *Fiberarts* 36:5 (April/May 2010), 24.

related to making – and finishing – objects by hand."[17] Zilber is perhaps more apt when she says that the emotions that are conveyed by the situation set up by Smull is an "endless source of fascination."[18] Smull is cited saying that she would rather complete the needlepoint works with a uniform white thread than finish the image as the canvas pattern recommends. With this, she says that her work underscores individual attitudes about labour.[19] It is ironic therefore that collaboration here supports an affirmative art of individuality rather than an unpacking of socially meaningful historical forms.

In moving away from the kind of studio work that is exemplified by Piñeres, Smull runs the risk of offering the art world an inverted mirror of its commercialized aspects. The social networking that is involved underscores the tendency towards entrepreneurial models that are encouraged by today's neoliberal institutions. Rather than strive for meanings that are distinctly contemporary, my own artwork emphasizes the relationship between the present and the past. One of the ways that I have done this is to emphasize the aspect of *systematization* that is inherent in needlepoint. In historical terms, as I have demonstrated, systematization does not always mean the same thing. As nineteenth-century Berlin work, which was forward looking, systematization offered a means to democratize access to embroidery and to liberal culture. This form of accessibility, which was invented in the early nineteenth century, and which, as we have seen with the work Piñeres and Smull, is still available to us today. The skilled manual work that went into needlepainting was replaced and mechanized through the intermediary of the Berlin work chart. As twentieth-century needlepoint, which is backward looking, the

[17] Zilber, "Mary Smull," 24.
[18] Zilber, "Mary Smull," 25.
[19] Smull in Zilber, "Mary Smull," 25.

systematization is de-emphasized and what is privileged instead is the hand-made quality of the work. Piñeres' and Smull's projects capitalize on such hand-made qualities as well, regardless of the historical sequence from which they emerge. The contradictory forces with regard to systematization make it so that the meaning and value of Berlin work, as it has been passed down through generations, remains highly uncertain. Whereas Piñeres and Smull receive the positive and negative aspects of mechanization as truths handed down, the method of effective history has allowed me to emphasize the social forces and processes that made and continue to make such truths normative.

In what ways has the action of genealogy served the needs of the present? One aspect of my use of needlepoint is its time-consuming aspect, which gives labour a social value it often does not have in capitalist culture. In contemporary culture, to make needlepoint projects is to go against the expediency of contemporary production. However, this matter of time that goes into making is not everything. The work that I have done has allowed me to put forward an account of the means by which needlepoint has become a submerged form of knowledge and so an account of power relations. Because of my research activity, the time that goes into my embroidery is allegorized as differentiated knowledge of the past. Two examples allow me to illustrate how effective history, understood as a history of errors, implies that the present is the ever-changing, uncertain result of the contradictory forces of the past. The first concerns a mid-nineteenth century Berlin work canvas of Edwin Landseer's *Shoeing*, which happens to be a very popular subject in the Victorian period.[20] I purchased the work through ebay on April 5, 2010,

[20] According to Molly Proctor: "The work[s] of Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-1873) … were made into Berlin patterns, but it was with his studies of animals and birds that he achieved his greatest success with the Queen and her people. He was an extremely fine

and did not receive it until two months later on June 4. The reason for this, I discovered, is that the object was delayed at Canadian customs. After I won the item from a seller in Chippenham, Wiltshire, England, I waited several weeks for it to arrive and eventually decided to contact the seller. He then gave me the name of the shipping company he had contracted. I called the shippers who told me that it had been received in Canada. The Canadian shippers had no record of the item and my search lasted more than a month until finally, they contacted me to say that the object was with Canadian customs. I was informed that I would need to hire a customs broker who would then present my bill of sale and proof of payment to customs officials. The staff member at the shipping company, who acted as the liaison between myself and the broker, told me over the telephone that customs officials did not believe that the monetary value listed on the shipping label was accurate. They suspected that the object was worth more than what was declared. I emailed the proof of sale as well as the receipt of the credit card payment, which was executed through Pay Pal. Approximately one week later I received the item. The large-framed Berlin work arrived in a box without the protective packaging. Despite customs officials' concern that the item might be more valuable than declared, the object was, at some point, clearly treated with less than adequate care; its backing was torn and a part of the nineteenth-century label went missing. Customs officials had nevertheless done well to wait for a proper identification of the object insofar as Landseer was a prominent painter of the nineteenth century. That said, as a

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painter and in his choice of subjects he gave the people what they wanted. Among his paintings made into patterns were *The Monarch of the Glen*, *The Distinguished Fellows of the Royal Humane Society*, *Dignity and Impudence*, *There's Life in the Old Dog Left* and portraits of the Queen's pets." Molly Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work: Berlin Wool Work* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1972), 101.

matter of conjecture, it would be interesting to discover how the average contemporary art historian might regard this object. The different ways in which it was treated is arguably symptomatic of its uncertain value and meaning, as it travels from the storehouse of an antique dealer to an artist's micro-archive. Its movement, both in terms of time and space, is marked by a play of forces that seek to make certain truths normative.

6.1 Maxine Dutts, Berlin work canvas (made in Calcutta) based on Edwin Landseer's *Shoeing (1844)*, 1872, 112.5 x 92.4 cm.

Another work in my collection is a needlepainting by Mary Linwood. I purchased this item from an English textile seller in 2008. It is one of approximately seventy needlepaintings that she is known to have produced. What is remarkable is that the work sold for very little. One would not, of course, look for the social and cultural worth of either the needlepainting or the Berlin work strictly in terms of their monetary value. Regardless, the items do circulate as antiques in a process of exchange that is informed by connoisseurship and institutional histories. However, their value is not strictly in the service of the economy. Other forms of power come into play in their analysis and these are witness to relations of force that are historically specific. For example, samplers from the nineteenth century tend to sell for much higher prices than Berlin work canvases. It is interesting to note that samplers tend to signify for us the history of women's socialization and subjugation. Whereas samplers are somehow safely consigned to the past, Berlin work in the form of needlepoint remains dangerously of the present. The history of Berlin work that I have proposed reveals values like intellectual accomplishment and industrial-age aesthetics that look past the limiting of Berlin work to the serial and mindless production of copies. It remains to be seen what these values mean to us today.

Berlin work introduced industrial efficiency into domestic embroidery. The association of embroidery in the 1870s with the institutionalized discourse of high art irrevocably altered the course of Berlin work and along with that, much of what could or would be known about it until, arguably, the present study. The purpose of a genealogical method is not to fix the legitimacy of power, but to reveal the techniques that have been used to efface the modes of domination that have disqualified local

knowledges. These forms of domination, as Foucault explains them, are not transmitted through sovereign power, but rather through a diffuse set of netlike social regulations, forces, energies, desires and thoughts.[21] As we have seen, some of these include the establishment of professional art associations, the cultivation of knowledge through practices of copying, the division of art and science during the period of industrialization, the redefinition of the amateur, the bourgeois ideology of separate spheres, the increased division of labour, and the commercialization of cultural practices. As we have seen with Stubbs' enamels and Boulton's mechanical painting, for example, enlightenment artists were concerned with the new possibilities for product innovation – concerns that drew on scientific advancement and the useful dissemination of knowledge. Berlin work was developed in this late enlightenment context and had very contradictory connections to the newly developing fine art discourse, which increasingly tended to be reserved for male artists. In the late nineteenth century, art needlework sought to contest mechanization by renewing pre-industrial techniques and subject matter, seeking to replace the industrial aspects of Berlin work with more exclusionary notions of artistic quality and skill. By that time the professionalization of art was no longer simply in formation, but was highly institutionalized and well-established. We have seen that just as the discourse of femininity found specific means to regulate behaviour through practices of embroidery, the discourse of aesthetic modernism that developed in the later nineteenth century called upon the embroiderer to demonstrate skills that were ostensibly different from those used by the practitioner of Berlin work. With the general decline of embroidery practices, it was not until the 1960s and 70s, with the postwar counter-

[21] Foucault, "Two Lectures," 35.

cultural renewal of interest in handicrafts, that embroidery histories began to be written with a view to social historical accounts of "history from the ground up." Since then, and with the rise of postmodern art discourses, the boundaries between disciplines and media have gradually eroded, making possible the kind of genealogy that is proposed here.

Working with the errors and deviations of the historical trajectory of Berlin work has been a way for me to visualize a genealogical reflection not only on the contemporary status of needlepoint but on how this status came into being. The purpose of this genealogy as effective history has not been to propose a reassuring recovery of the past in terms of an official account based on a unified object of textual analysis, but to understand the past as a place of confrontation, where interpretive action has produced discontinuity and substitutions, and where subjugated knowledges have been brought into play with official discourses. This history of errors has allowed me to simultaneously produce artwork that questions artistic practice as a value-producing and meaning-making enterprise.

MICRO-ARCHIVE

The micro-archive includes texts and visual materials, artworks and artefacts, that were collected over a period of several years. Much of this material was collected through the use of internet sites like ebay and Bookfinder. Such virtual warehouses are relatively new; they offer access to antique shops and flea markets on a much wider geographical and temporal scale than previously manageable and they contain a variety of materials that are not typically found in museum collections. Collecting items related to my research has become one way to supplement and expand institutional archival research. What is important to consider, is that much of this material is not found in the museum textile collections that I visited.

Making use of the virtual storehouse this way is in line with my previous needlegraph work. The antiquated, antique, vintage, used, discarded, and unearthed objects, so-called unofficial and inadequate objects and venues, are important contributions to a genealogy of Berlin work. Framed within this micro-archive, these objects are open to re-semanticization. For example, a Berlin work is sometimes described by a seller as "shabby chic" or as ideal for making a decorative pillow, and to that end, those with floral motifs are more highly valued than the pictorial works. Such decorative uses are typical of twentieth-century constructions of Berlin work. Within this micro-archive, pictorial Berlin works and patterns allow us to rethink this recent history, to denaturalize the relationship between embroidery, painting, and contemporary practices, allowing for meanings and uses that go beyond medium specificity.

The list of contents is divided into the following groupings:

1. Needlegraphs and other visual works made by myself
2. Needlepainting, silkwork, printwork
3. Berlin work charts
4. Berlin work embroideries
5. Prints and broadsheets
6. Books
7. Miscellaneous

Note: Many of the item descriptions begin with information provided by the seller, which is sometimes corrected or supplemented with additional information. Some of the entries include notes concerning my rationale for acquisition.

1. Needlegraphs and Visual Works

Needlegraph is the term I use to describe a series of works that combine an anonymously-produced, twentieth-century needlepoints of master paintings, paired with monochrome needlepoints that I produce and that detail the errors and inconsistencies of the latter. The items in this grouping are listed chronologically, starting with the most recent.

Millet Matrix, 2010-2012. Wool on canvas, 63 x 78 cm and 63 x 78.

After Wassily Kandinsky, Composition IX (1936), 2009. Needlepoint, wool on canvas, 34.5 x 45.3 and 34.6 x 46.2 cm.

Untitled, (Transatlantic Voyage), 2009. Sound recording, 60 minutes, 10 seconds.

Untitled, (Linwood Chart Project, in progress), 2009-. Study of Linwood needlepainting, photograph, watercolour on paper, colour pencil on paper, mylar.

After Jan Vermeer, The Lacemaker (c.1669-1670), 2008. Wool on canvas, 45.5 x 37.1 and 46.2 x 37.8 cm.

Millet Grid. 2006. Comprising: *After Jean-François Millet, Gleaners (1857)*, 2002-2003, and *After Jean-François Millet, Gleaners (1857)*, 2006. Wool on canvas, 24.7 x 30.5 and 24.7 x 29.3 cm, and, 23.9 x 30.7 and 23.8 x 29.9 cm.

After Jean François Millet, Gleaners (1857), 2006. Wool on canvas, 23.9 x 30.7 and 23.8 x 29.9 cm.

Untitled, (self)portrait, 2006. Video 18.5 hours. Stitching of *After Jean-François Millet, Gleaners (1857)*, 2006.

After Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Compotier (1879-1882), 2005-2006. Cotton on canvas, 40.4 x 51 and 39.3 x 50.8 cm.

After Jean-Siméon Chardin, The Kitchen Maid (1783), 2004. Wool on canvas, 70.6 x 55.9 and 72.7 x 56.8 cm.

After Jean-François Millet, Gleaners (1857), 2002-2003. Wool on canvas, 24.7 x 30.5 and 24.7 x 29.3 cm.

After Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Girls Selling Fruit (c.1670-1675), 2004. Wool on canvas, 70.7 x 55.6 and 69.7 x 56.4 cm.

After Mary Cassatt, On the Omnibus (1890-91), 2000-2004. Cotton on canvas, 50 x 109 cm.

After Sir Joshua Reynolds, Age of Innocence (1788), 2002-2003. Wool on canvas, 25.3 x 20.8 and 24.6 x 20.2 cm.

After Mary Cassatt, Gathering Fruit (1893), 1994-1996. Cotton on canvas, 62 x 203 cm.

2. Needlepainting, Silkwork, Printwork

• Mary Linwood, *Partridges, after Haughton,* c.1789. Embroidered picture in gilt frame, wool and silk, 58.5 x 48.3 cm. (#2008-01-31)

Pictorial embroidery/needlepainting made after a painting with the same name by Moses Haughton the Elder (1734-1804). The embroidery is worked in crewel wool in long and short stitch and is highlighted with silk, on woven ground. It is in a period, heavy-gilt frame with glass. The total size measures 73.7 x 63.5 cm. Moses Haughton trained as an enamel painter in Wednesbury and is remembered as a painter of still lives. Between 1788-1804 he exhibited works occasionally at the Royal Academy.

The needlepainting depicts two dead partridges hanging from a string or snare. The background is shallow and evenly coloured, broken only by an anamorphic shadow of the partridges, which creates a kind of hole or stain in the surface and against which a feather is seen falling. This is a fine example of Linwood's work. The stitching is fine and tight and the needlepainting is in excellent condition. This is a rare and important item that has become pivotal to my research-creation and central to this micro-archive.

Linwood regularly published exhibition catalogues. *Partridges* appears in a 1789 exhibition catalogue for Hanover Square and is listed in subsequent exhibition catalogues until her death. *Partridges* was sold at auction alongside with other works by Linwood following her death. It was publicly exhibited again in 1945 in a centennial exhibition commemorating the death of Linwood. The exhibition was curated by Norma Whitcomb and held at the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, the city where Linwood lived during most of her life. The embroidery was lent to the museum by Miss M.E. Cartwright. I purchased this needlepainting from Meg Andrews, a reputable English antique textile dealer, after learning about the sale of this work through her internet listing. Andrews describes the condition and cleaning of the embroidery as such:

"Excellent. This picture has been cleaned by a well-known and professional conservator. It was extremely dirty and had been nailed with rusty nails to the stretcher and had newspaper glued around the edges. The picture was removed from its stretcher, gently vacuum suctioned to removed loose dust and soiling. The picture was then cleaned in trichlovoethane solvent and soaked in changes of deionized water to remove soiling. Washed using a nonionic solution, rinsed using deionized water, soaked with a lubricating medium in deionized water, rinsed, paper removed from edges and dried. Then stitched to a fabric covered board. Put back into its original frame."

• Unknown maker, Landscape, small canoe approaching walled city, c.1800. Silk embroidered picture in period gilt frame, 27.43 x 29.2 cm. (# 2012-03-10)

This embroidered picture is in the style of needlepainting, that is to say, short and long stitch is put to the use of pictorial representation, as paint would have been. It is in very good condition.

• Unknown maker, Fruit Basket and Nut Basket, c.1783-1814. A pair of embroidered pictures, wool on woven ground, each is 25.4 x 17.8 cm. (#2011-10-29)

These are both in good condition with some loss to the stitch work on table edge. The fruit and nuts, leaves, baskets, and tables are embroidered in short and long stitch, like needlepainting, with the remaining area, the background or negative spaces, left bare. The woven support is visible. Both works are unframed. The paper label that is glued to the back of one of the stretchers reads: "Thomas Merle, successor to the late Mr. [Joseph] Overlove, picture framer, carver, gilder and printseller, at the Golden Key 36 Leadenhall Street, London." Tomas Merle worked at this address from 1783-1814.[1]

• Unknown maker, *The Brigand, after Eastlake*, c.1822-38. Embroidered picture, silk and watercolour on silk, 48.3 x 68.6 cm, in gilt frame 70 x 90 cm. (#2012-07-04)

This silkwork picture is based on an engraving by William Humphreys, which is made after Sir Charles Eastlake (1793-1865). The faces, hands, and sky area are painted, with the remaining area embroidered using a number of different stitch techniques. The silk was backed with a canvas before being embroidered. The embroidery is in good condition, however the silk in the sky area is torn.

Eastlake was an artist, academic, collector and curator. In 1823 Eastlake's "Banditti" paintings, including the one *The Brigand* copies, were exhibited to great interest in London. In 1829 James Robinson Planché (1796-1880), dramatist and expert on historical costume, produced *The Brigand*, which recreated three of Eastlake's paintings from his "Banditti" works, though not this one, as *tableaux vivants*.[2] As Keeper and then as first Director of the National Gallery, London, Eastlake's methods of studying, collecting and managing painting were ground-breaking. He instigated the now common practices of cataloging and conservation, and he exhibited works chronologically and by country, rather than in the existing salon style.[3] Eastlake translated Goethe's *Colour Theory* (1840), and Fraz Kugler's *Handbook of the History of Painting* (1842), and

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[1] Online directory compiled by Jacob Simon, *British Picture Framemakers, 1630-1950*. National Portrait Gallery, second edition 2009. http://www.npg.org.uk/research/conservation/directory-of-british-framemakers/m.php (31/07/2012).

[2] Brenda Assael. "Art or Indecency? 'Tableaux Vivants' on the London Stage and the Failure of Late Victorian Moral Reform," 744-758. In *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4 (October, 2006), 745. (Consulted online through the Concordia University Library 30/06/2012).

[3] *Biography of Sir Charles Lock Eastlake (1793-1865), artist and first Director of the National Gallery*. National Gallery, London, website. http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/directors/sir-charles-eastlake (consulted 30/06/2012).

published his own works, including his enduring works, *Materials for a History of Oil Painting* in 1847, and *Contributions to the Literature of the fine Arts* in 1848.[4]

• Unknown maker, A Castle with a Small Figure, c.1780-1820. Embroidered picture, silk on silk, framed, 38.1 x 34.3 cm. (#2010-05-30)

Printwork embroidery in black thread on pale ground, resembling an engraving. Illusionistic representation with use of shading and perspective. Sustained damage in shipping, frame needs repairs if it is to be shown.

• Unknown maker, *Ruins of Rome*, *after Middleton*, c.1779-1800. Embroidered silk picture, gilt frame, image 19.5 x 27.5 cm, frame 27.1 x 35 cm. (#2012-05-29)

Printwork embroidery in black thread on pale ground resembling an engraving. Copy of Charles Theodore Middleton's *Engraving for Middleton's Complete System of Geography, Ruins of Rome* (1778), reproduces the architecture and ruins of the original but without the human figures. In good condition, with broken threads on one of the columns. It is accompanied by a letter from its previous owner, Fred Madoni, who explains that his father, an Italian stone mason, purchased the work in London prior to WWI and likely in an antique market in Greenwich. His father was working on the observatory at the time. Item #2012-05-27 is a copy of the print.

• Unknown maker, Mother and Child, c. 1780-1820. Embroidered silk picture, gilt frame, 20.5 x 17.8 cm. (#2012-09-06)

Very fine printwork embroidery in thin dark thread on pale ground resembling a stippled print or drawing. Glued to back part of framer's label: "KEY… FRAME-MAKER… Mar… Cleans and rep… scription, as we… Needle-work carefully Framed & Glazed Drawings on Silk for Embroidery or Print Work. Drawing Paper, Pencils, Colours, &c. with every other Article for the use of Drawing or Painting; Borders. …dallions, Varn…"

3. Berlin Work Charts

This section contains hand-painted Berlin work charts and a few mechanically produced charts. Berlin charts infrequently appear for sale, and so my collection is shaped by what is typically available. I have focused on pictorial translations. Although charts of flowers and abstract patterns are seen more often, I have not collected these.

• L.W. Wittich of Berlin, Hand-painted chart (Violin lesson), c.1810-1830. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 31.2 x 25.2 cm, paper 35.7 x 29.1 cm. (#2005-06-14)

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[4] Database, *Dictionary of Art Historians: A Biographical Dictionary of Historic Scholars, Museum Professionals and Academic Historians of Art*. http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/eastlakec.htm (consulted 30/06/2012)

• A. Todt in Berlin, Hand-painted chart (stylized floral on black), c.1810-70. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 22.2 x 27.9 cm, paper 36.8 x 43.8 cm. (#2006-05-04)

This chart is exceptional in that it is not particularly pictorial and has a floral motif. Its colouring and layout is evenly distributed and bright, with stylized motifs on a black background.

• Unknown Maker, Mechanically coloured chart *Mode und Hous*, c.1920-30 (?). Colour print, 23.7 x 15.7 cm.

The text below the image includes "Stickereivorlage für einem Wandschmuck… verwendbar… Gobelin-und petit point-, kreuzstich-oder perlen sticherei" which translates into something like 'Embroidery template for a wall decoration… suitable for… tapestry and petit point, cross stitch or bead stitching.'

• G. Silbermann, Mechanically coloured chart *Railway Travelling Bag*, in *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, Strasburgh Print, 1864. Colour print, 20.3 x 15.2 cm. (#2007-07-05)

The chart depicts a train engine bordered by a Celtic design. According to a written description of the patterns given by *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, the pattern was distributed June 1864.[5]

• L.W. Wittich, Hand-painted chart (seated knight with young child in one arm), c.1810-30. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 48 x 42 cm, paper 59 x 49 cm. (#2007-10-28a)

• A. Grunthal, Hand-painted chart *Das Gestörte Stell Dich Ein*, c.1810-70. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 50.5 x 43.5 cm, paper 56 x 48.5 cm. (#2007-10-28b)

The chart depicts an old woman questioning a young woman in a yard, below the image is printed *Das Gestörte Stell Dich Ein*, which translates as the disturbed rendez-vous.

• W. Gabbe, Hand-painted chart ('Orientalism' style balcony setting with man and woman), c.1810-1870. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 31 x 24 cm, paper 51.5 x 37.5 cm. (#2007-10-30)

Berlin bei W. Gabbe, Nieder Wall St N.31.

• L.W. Wittich, Hand-painted chart (troubadour with drummer boy), c.1810-1830. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 48.3 x 41.9 cm, 48.7 x 41.1 cm. (#2007-11-07)

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[5] Molly G. Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work: Berlin Wool Work*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1972, 146.

• L.W. Wittich, Hand-painted chart (Turkish horseman), c.1810-30. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 56 x 52 cm, paper 63.5 x 59,7 cm. (#2008-11-09)

• A. Todt, Hand-painted chart *David and Jonathan*, c.1810-70. Watercolour and ink on paper, thin gilt frame fixed to chart, 29 x 22 cm. (#2009-04-16)

• The Young Ladies' Journal, Mechanically coloured chart *The Artist's Slipper in Berlin Wool Work*, 1883. Colour print, 29 x 19 cm. (#2009-06-22)

Another exception in that this chart is not for a pictorial work but to decorate a slipper. The pattern depicts a painting palette, brushes, tubes of paint and pencils.

• *The Young Ladies' Journal*, Mechanically coloured chart *Holly and mistletoe*, 1872. Colour print, 56.5 x 37.8 cm. (#2010-01-11a)

An embroidery of this pattern of a women carrying holly and mistletoe is reproduced on page 265 of Lanto Synge's *Art of Embroidery*.

• *The Young Ladies' Journal*, Mechanically coloured chart of *Fruit*, 1874. Colour print, 56.5 x 37.8 cm. (#2010-01-11b)

This is a brightly coloured pattern with a female figure standing by a table overflowing with fruit and a parrot. The bottom of the page reads:

"Messrs. J. Bedford & Co., Regent Street, and 46 Goodge Street, Tottenham Court Road, London, supply the materials for working the above design, either for a Picture or Cheval Screen, for 9/6; Silks for the lightest shades 3/6 extra; commencing 1/- extra; postage 6d. The Subscribers to The Young Ladies' Journal can be supplied with Hand Frames for working the design in for 2/-; or a Carpet Frame in Stand for 16/6. J. B. & Co. also undertake to mount the work when completed, in a very elegant Walnut Cheval Screen for 63/-; in Black and Gold for 84/-; or Plain Gold, with ornamental feet, for £5:5:0."

• L.W. Wittich, Hand-painted chart *Der Gasthof Belle Alliance*, c.1810-30. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 12.1 x 19.9 cm, paper 19.2 x 27.4 cm. (#2012-01-09a)

This hand-painted engraved chart does not appear to have any symbols below the paint. It depicts a landscape with a one-story building in foreground. The "*Der Gasthof Belle Alliance"* is incorporated into the design across the bottom. Engraved at the top right is "131", and at the bottom centre "Berlin bei L W Wittich." (in an older style script). At the bottom right, in pen, the number 2 is hand-written. On the back there are remains of blue paper glued around the edges.

• L.W. Wittich, Hand-painted chart *Der Sprudel und die Hygiea's Quelle xu Karlsbud*, c.1810-30. Watercolour and ink on paper, image 14.5 x 20.2 cm, paper 24.7 x 35.9 cm. (#2012-01-09b)

This hand-painted engraved chart does not appear to have any symbols below the paint. It depicts a cityscape by a shore, with billowing steam coming from one building and a bridge coming towards the foreground. The "*Der Sprudel und die Hygiea's Quelle xu Karlsbud"* is incorporated into the design across the bottom. Pasted directly under the chart, covering the printer's credit line is the seller's label: "Au Père de Famille Rue Thionville (Dauphine) au coin de celle d'Anjou à Paris. Magazine de Fils, Epingles, Aiguilles, Laines, Soies et Coton à Broder." "Berlin bei L.W.Wittich, …" can just be made out through the label. Engraved on the top right corner is the number 552, and in the lower right (by hand?) is the number 3. On the back there are the remains of blue paper glued around the edges. This chart was purchased along with the above.

• *Journal des Dames & Demoiselles, Édition Belge*. Two hand-painted charts of *Sajou* (The ruins of an arch and a building), c.1855. Watercolour and ink on paper, paper 23.7 x 32.7 cm. (#2012-04-16)

Both charts are monochromatic, painted in white to dark brown. Each pattern measures 11 x 11 cm. At the top of the page is engraved the journal's name and edition. At the centre bottom is indicated "Sajou" and then "Fabricant de Dessins pour Tapisserie, Broderie et Ouvrages Divers" followed by "Paris, 52 Rue de Rambuteau, 52." Stamped onto the paper at the bottom right are the words: "Exposition Universelle 1855" "Médaille de 1ière classe" "Sajou à Paris" "Rue de Rambuteau 52." The page has been folded at center on a light engraved line.

• P. L., Hand-painted chart (abstract), 1931. Watercolour and ink on paper, 19 x 29 cm. (#2012-06-24a)
• P. L., Hand-painted chart (abstract), 1931. Watercolour and ink on paper, 19 x 29 cm. (#2012-06-24b)
• P. L., Hand-painted chart (abstract), 1931. Watercolour and ink on paper, 19 x 29 cm. (#2012-06-24c)
• P. L., Hand-painted chart (abstract), 1931. Watercolour and ink on paper, 19 x 29 cm. (#2012-06-24d)
• P. L., Hand-painted chart (abstract), c.1920. Watercolour and ink on paper, 19 x 29 cm. (#2012-06-24e)
• P. L., Hand-painted chart (abstract), c.1920. Watercolour and ink on paper, 19 x 29 cm. (#2012-06-24f)

The charts #2012-06-24, a to f, were an unexpected find. They are interesting as material objects that are divorced from their role as guides because by this date very good colour printing had become inexpensive. They are hand-painted and as such #2012-06-24, a to d, are small paintings reminiscent of the abstract painting of the period. #2012-06-24a is like a Matisse, and #2012-06-24b is like a Moholy-Nagy. #2012-06-24, e to f, are copies of the same floral motif. At first sight I thought these patterns might be designers' copies from a pre-printing stage. However, the two identical patterns suggest otherwise. Also, these patterns all indicate copyright and made in Germany. The first four have three logos at the top: P.L., 50 Jarhre 1881-1931, and Hous Lindenhorst. The last two indicate only the P.L. All six include numbers with a colour key.

4. Berlin Work Embroideries

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (young woman in Roman dress bowing before a man, perhaps biblical), c.1810-1870. Wool and silk on canvas, 14 point per inch cross stitch, frame 55 x 45.5 cm. (#2006)

Item is in good condition and colour remains bright. There is a second copy of this scene see item #2012-04-13.

Gilt frame from later period, back label: "F. J. HARRIS 7 SON (art shop) Established 1821 Telephone 5916 RESTORERS OF OIL PAINTINGS, WATER COLOUR, DRAWINGS, PASTELS, CRAYONS & PRINTS PICTURE FRAME MAKERS 13 & 14 GREEN STREET, BATH NO. 46010 Aug. 1964."

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (figure with dog receiving assistance from a couple at an arched doorway), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 54.5 x 44 cm. (#2007-03-04)

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *The Tribute Money, after Copley*, c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 62 x 51.8 cm. (#2010-02-15)

Embroidered picture after John Singleton Copley's 1782 painting *The Tribute Money*, oil on canvas, 128.27 x 153.67 cm, in the Royal Academy of Arts collection. There is a second Berlin work after Copley's painting, see #2010-02-24.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *The Tribute Money, after Copley*, c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 46 x 40 cm. (#2010-02-24)

Embroidered picture after John Singleton Copley's 1782 painting. Compared to item #2010-02-15, there is an additional figure in this image, but still one less than in the painting. Also similar to the painting, the background is open, depicting a blue sky with clouds while the other embroidery has an architectural element. I take these to be exemplary of the popularity of the style and content of the painting and that several (at least two) interpretations of the painting circulated.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *The Last Supper*, c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 54 x 50 cm. (#2010-02-24)

This was a popular theme and in the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition catalogue, several Berlin work embroideries of *The Last Supper* are listed. This version of *The Last Supper* appears to be based on a sixteenth-century painting of this subject (architecture resembles Girolano da Santacroce, curtain Gerad Segers, and layout El Greco).

• Maxine Dutts, Embroidered Picture *Shoeing the Horse, after Landseer*, 1872. Wool on canvas, black and gilt frame, image 96.5 x 76.2 cm, frame 111.8 x 91.5 cm. (#2010-04-05)

This is an embroidered copy of Sir Edwin Landseer's painting *Shoeing*, (142.2 x 111.3 cm), which was first exhibited in 1844 and is now in the Tate collection. At the time, Landseer was very popular and many of his works were translated into Berlin work charts. The embroidery is labeled on the back *Shoeing the Horse*, as the painting was/is frequently referred to. It was embroidered by Dutts while in Calcutta, and later framed in England, by F.J. Harris &Son. Unfortunately, part of the original paper label on the back was lost by customs.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (shepherd bowing to older man and young woman, biblical scene), c.1810-90. Wool on canvas, 53.5 x 43.2 cm. (#2010-05-27)

• Anne Watkins, Embroidered Picture *Anne Watkins aged 10 1865*, 1865. Wool on canvas, 53.5 x 38.1 cm. (#2010-06-25a)

This embroidered picture of couple with a child is perhaps a biblical scene, but there is also a raised curtain knotted at the top of the image which adds an element that is normally reserved for painting. This Berlin work and its accompanying embroidery #2010-06-25b are unusual in that the name, age and date of the maker is added as part of the embroidery across the bottom of the canvas, somewhat like a sampler. I have not seen many signed embroideries though this may have been a common practice among young girls since Berlin work did in most cases replace the sampler.

• Mary Watkins, Embroidered Picture *Mary Watkins aged 11 1865*, 1865. Wool on canvas, 55.9 x 43.2 cm. (#2010-06-25b)

This embroidered picture of a shepherd and a shepherdess is perhaps a biblical scene. The work and its accompanying embroidery #2010-06-25a are unusual in that the name, age and date of the maker is added as part of the embroidery across the bottom of the canvas, somewhat like a sampler. See above.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (domestic interior with hunter and dog departing), c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, on original stretcher, 42.5 x 36 cm. (#2010-07-11)

Made from a Wittich chart, an example of which can be seen in the Prints and Drawings collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. Fine point stitch. I have two additional copies like this one, in different sizes, see #2011-08-28a and #2012-07-27b.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *Saint Patrick*, c.1810-1890. Wool and silk on canvas, 116.8 x 81.3 cm. (#2010-07-13)

Saint Patrick is seen carrying a book (bible) and a staff, with a snake at his feet. There is a Church tower and a stream in the background. This depiction, made in a nineteenth-century style, is strikingly similar to a print from an unknown publication (image has been separated from book) which is posted at http://www.restoredtraditions.com/st-patrick-color.aspx. This embroidery requires re-squaring and some stabilizing (on a backing). It appears to have been washed.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (interior domestic scene with an older woman offering a chicken at the window), c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, 54 x 43 cm. (#2010-08-20)

Genre style embroidered picture, interior with paintings, a fireplace with screen, and a woman doing needlework by an open window. An older woman is at the window with an arm outstretched offering a chicken. The colour is faded and the black thread, mainly limited to the fire place, has disintegrated. The damage is localized to just the black, suggesting that perhaps something about the chemical component of the dye made it more unstable. The point stitch is very fine and the work is on its original stretcher.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (biblical scene, Jesus speaking with a woman), c.1810-1890. Wool and silk on canvas, 39.4 x 33 cm. (#2011-01-15)

Fine point stitch and very little fading. Detailed religious scene with good pictorial composition.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (girl at a window), c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, 55 x 60 cm. (#2011-01-20)

Embroidered picture with background area left unstitched so that the fine canvas is visible. Tent stitch, with face and hands in smaller stitch. It is on its original stretcher.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *Scene in the Olden Times at Bolton Abbey, after Sir Edwin Landseer*, c.1834-1890. Wool on canvas, 69 x 87 cm. (#2011-10-25)

Embroidered picture after Landseer's 1834 painting. Molly Proctor included a black and white reproduction of a Berlin work version of this work in her book, where we see a hill and trees through an archway.[6] This one is like the painting. There is a colour image of a Berlin Work very similar to the one depicted by Proctor with a bright sky which can be seen at http://WWW.sainthelena-centresquare.net/?page_id=153 (Saint Helena Church, Blue Bell PA). Related to this image, Elizabeth Stone in 1840 remarks about the Berlin chart publishers:

"when they have a good design to copy from, they mar all by the introduction of some adventitious frippery, as in the 'Bolton Abbey,' where the repose and beautiful effect of

[6] Molly Proctor, Victorian Canvas Work: Berlin Wool Work. London: B.T. Batsford, 1972, 78.

the picture is destroyed by the introduction of a bright sky, and straggling bushes of lively green, just where the Artist had thought it necessary to depict the stillness of the inner court of the Monastery, with its solemn grey walls, as a relief to the figures in the foreground."[7]

I have noted at least two other embroidery copies of this work on offer on ebay.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *The Signing of the Magna Carta*, c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, 94 x 66 cm. (#2011-07-10)

A Berlin work embroidery, which appears to have been made from a copy from the same chart, is presented by Stephan Antiques at time of writing:
http://www.stefaniantiques.co.uk/information.php?category_id=9&item_id=24&start=20&PHPSESSID=f62647e39f0b5ae49b76c6401784973f
This other example is dated 1865 with the maker's name and location, and has the title *Magna Carta Signed at Runnymede June 19 1215* inscribed at the bottom.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture *Charles I Saying Goodbye to His Children*, c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, 70.5 x 48.3 cm. (#2011-04-07)

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (domestic genre of a girl feeding a child), c.1810-1890. Wool on canvas, 32.4 x 22.9 cm. (#2011-07-12)

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (interior with hunter and dog departing), c.1810-1790. Wool on canvas, 38.1 x 33 cm. (#2011-08-28a)

Fine embroidery, 24 points per inch, made from Wittich chart for which there is a copy in the Victoria and Albert Museum. I have two other embroidered copies like this one, all different sizes. See also #2010-07-11 and #2012-07-27b.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (interior with hunter and dog, preparing food), c.1810-1790. Wool on canvas, 38.1 x 33 cm. (#2011-08-28b)

It can be assumed that this Berlin work, which appears to be part of a series along with #2011-08-28a, was made from a Berlin work chart by Wittich.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (couple in romantic tryst), c.1810-1870. Wool and silk on canvas, 65 x 49.5 cm. (#2011-11-09)

This embroidery has some damage and will need to be stabilized into a backing if it is to be shown.

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[7] Elizabeth Stone (attri.). *A History of Needlework, An Account of the Ancient Historical Tapestries*. Signed by The Countess of Wilton. London: Henry Colburn. 1840, 399.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (boy on a horse picking fruit from a branch extended beyond a fence, while mother holds the animal in place), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 47 x 31.8 cm. (#2011-11-10)

• Louis Snell, *Louise Snell's Work 1855,* 1855. Embroidered Picture in gilt frame, wool on canvas, image 66 x 72.4 cm, frame 80.6 x 84.6 cm.

Depiction of three female figures sitting in a garden. The one on the left is holds a baby; the one in the center holds a wine goblet; and the one oh the right holds a lily. There are birds and animals among the flowers. It is signed and dated at the bottom.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (interior with hunter and dog, preparing food), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 60 x 48 cm. (#2011-11-30a)

Same depiction as #2011-08-28b and can also be assumed to have been made from a Wittich Berlin work chart. It is one of three embroideries the seller acquired at the same time. All three are of the same size and are backed with the same blue silk. The other two are #2011-11-30b-c.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (pheasants in woodland), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 60 x 48 cm. (#2011-11-30b)

It is one of three embroideries the seller acquired at the same time. All three are of the same size and are backed with the same blue silk. The other two are #2011-11-30a-c.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (Scottish battlefield, several figures including two men on horseback and a woman being cared for), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 60 x 48 cm. (#2011-11-30c)

This is one of three embroideries the seller acquired at the same time. All three are of the same size and are backed with the same blue silk. The other two are #2011-11-30a-b.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (troubadour with drummer boy), 1839. Silk on canvas, in original wood frame with gilt mount under glass, frame 2011-12-0629 x 25 cm.

This embroidery was made from a Wittich chart. Item #2007-11-07 is a chart for this design. The point size is extremely fine, requiring a magnifying glass to determine that it is in fact embroidered. The condition of this embroidery is very good, with no damage or wear and some fading.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (young woman in Roman dress bowing before a man, perhaps biblical), c.1810-1870. Wool and silk on canvas, 137 x 114.7 cm. (#2012-04-13)

The embroidery is on its original stretcher. It is in good condition though dark (dirty). There is another embroidery with the same depiction in the micro-archive, see item #2006.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (religious portrait), c. 1810-1870. Wool and silk on canvas, 50.8 x 43.2 cm. (#2012-07-27a)

Italian-style portrait, perhaps of St. Peter. This is not only a pictorial representation, but a good stylistic copy of Italian painting. Fine point embroidery and good colour.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (domestic interior with hunter and dog departing), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, on original stretcher, 43.2 x 39.4 cm. (#2012-07-27b)

Made from a Wittich chart, an example of which can be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings collection. Colours remain strong. I have two other embroidered copies like this one, all different sizes. See also #2010-07-11 and #2011-08-28a.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (boy standing outside something tucked under his arm and a dog sitting next to him), c.1810-1870. Wool on canvas, 24 point per inch, frame, visible 18.4 x 13.7 cm, 22.5 x 18 cm. (#2012-09-04)

Label on the back says: "T. GILBERT, Ltd., Practical Picture Frame Makers and Gilders. Dealers in Paintings, Water Colour Drawings, Engravings, Chromo Studies, &c. 7 EUSTON ROAD, KING'S CROSS, (facing G N. R. Station) Tel. Terminus 6622. 10 Cricklewood Broadway, N.W.2; 3 Broadway Parade, Crouch End, N.8; 243 High Road, Kilburn, N.W.6. ALL WORK DONE ON THE PREMISES. ARTIST' COLOURMEN." Item and frame are in very nice condition with minor loss.

• Unknown maker, Embroidered Picture (possibly biblical, parents walking/traveling with a boy), c.1810-1870. Wool and silk on canvas, 53 x 45 cm. (#2012-09-15)

Though a mirror image the figures resemble Rembrandt's etching *The Flight Into Egypt: The Holy Family Crossing the Rill* (1654), but with the open background of Jacob de Wit's painting *Holy Family and Trinity* (1754).

5. Prints and Broadsheets

• P.W. Tomkins, *Miss Mary Linwood*, 1806. Stippled colour print, image size 39.3 x 31.5 cm, sheet size 53.2 x 42.2 cm. (#2009-06-17)

• Honoré Daumier, *Monomanes no. 2: Le Brodeur*, 1840. Lithograph printed by Aubert et Cie, in *Le Charivari* #319 (November 15, 1840) page 3; 35.7 x 25.7 cm. Four page broadside. (#2011-02-14)

Under the heading *Monomanes*, this is an illustration of a man working at an embroidery frame, with the title *Le Brodeur* below. The image is accompanied by a text that reads:

"Exemple des erreurs que commet parfois la nature dans l'étiquette des sexes. Ainsi, de meme qu'on voit de soi-disant femmes qui portent la culotte, une façon de moustaches, qui jouent du cornet-à-piston, de la contrebasse, ou qui composent des romans humanitaires; de meme on voit de soi-disant homes, qui pincent de la harpe, ourlent des cravattes, brodent au tambour avec leurs mains d'homme, et qui au besoin, font un peu de cuisine."

Monomania is a term that appears in the early period of French psychiatry. In his "Note on monomania," in his 1827 translation of Hoffbauer's *Treatise of Forensic Medicine,* Esquirol observes that it is "pathology of feelings and the will without aggravated disturbances of the intellect." This moved the interpretation of some acts from the scope of justice, to that of the new discipline.[8] By 1840, the term was disputed, leading to the emergence of the "sociology" of mental illness.[9]

• "The Late Miss Linwood." *The Illustrated London News*, March 22, 1845, p. 185. Sheet 41 x 28 cm. Includes Linwood portraits, engraver not identified. (#2011-08-21)

• Charles Alfred Ashburton, *Engraved for Ashburton's History of England. A Male and Female, Ancient Britain*. Credit line: Published by W. & J. Stratfords, No. 112 Holborn Hill, April 1, 1793. Double wood engraving, plate 21.5 x 31.9 cm, page 24.3 x 38.8 cm. (#2011-12-05)

• Emile Pierre Metzmacher, *Le lion amoureux*, c.1888-1915. Steel plate photogravure, image 16.3 x 12.5 cm, plate 22.6 x 17.8 cm, paper 30.3 x 22.2 cm. (#2012-05-09)

A photomechanical reproduction of a painting by Metzmacher (1815-1905), depicting an imaginary scene with Napoleon learning to embroider, while his object of desire looks on amused. Interior with textiles and high relief figure on mantel. The artist's name, the title, and Salon 1888, are also printed. No publisher, engraver, or date is given. The seller suggests it is a copy made for a high end publication.

• Charles Theodore Middleton, *Engraved for Middleton's Complete System of Geography. Ruins of Rome*, c.1778. Engraving, plate 19 x 28.9 cm, page 22.5 x 35.8 cm. (#2012-05-27)

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[8] Robert Castel, "The Doctors and Judges," *I Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother… : A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, 250-269. Edited by Michel Foucault. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975, 255.

[9] Alexandre Fontana, "The Intermittences of Rationality," *I Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother… : A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, 269-288. Edited by Michel Foucault. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975, 281.

Title taken from text on print. Also engraved are the titles of six elements depicted, identified by a number. These are: The Temple of Concord, Temple of Antoninus, Arch of Titus, Statue of M Aurelius, Marcellus' theatre, Trajan's Pillar. Purchased to accompany the printwork of the same image, see item #2012-05-29.

• *Un page d'après Wittich*, in *Magazin Pittoresque*, 1841. Engraving, 28 x 17 cm, with article. (#2012-08-05)

Magazine Pittoresque was a successful French magazine, covering all manner of subjects (history, art, science, industry, travel, morals, etc.) to educate and entertain. It was based on the English model, created by Edouard Charton in 1833.

• Arthur George Von Ramberg, *Mis-stitches*, Engraved by Edmann Martin, c.1883-2000. Engraving, image 25.5 x 19.5, page 29.5 x 23.4 cm.

Sold as an 1883 engraving with no plate mark. This engraving appears in *Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings*. The entry on Ramberg states that he was popular for his illustrations of Goethe's *Heman and Dorothea*.[10] It is a romantic depiction of a woman working at an embroidery stretcher with her amorous admirer sitting by her side.

6. Books

• Christie, Mrs Archimbald [Grace]. *Samplers and Stitches: A Handbook of the Embroideres's Art*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1920.

• Edwards, Joan. *The First of Joan Edwards' Small Books on the History of Embroidery: Berlin Work*. Dorking, Surrey: Bayford Books, 1980.

• Goubaud, Madame Adolphe. *Madame Goubaud's Berlin Work Instructions*. London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, c.1870.

• Higgin, Letitia. *Handbook of Embroidery.* East Molesey and Surrey: Royal School of Needlework, [1880 facsimile] 2010.

• Kendrick, A.F. *English Embroidery*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1904.

• *Ladies' Work-Box Companion. A Handbook of Knitting, Tatting, and Berlin work. Containing entirely New Receipts*. New York: Geo. A. Leavitt, c.1850.

• Lambert, Miss. *The Hand-Book of Needlework*. London: John Murray, 1842.

[10] John Denison Champlin, Jr., and Charles C. Perkins, *Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings*. New York: C. Scribner' Sons, 1883, 5. Full page illustration comes before text but is unnumbered. Consulted at: http://archive.org/details/cu31924061775874.

• Linwood, Mary. *Miss Linwood's Exhibition, Leicester Square*. London: Printed by T. Brettell, 1835.

• Loewenthal, L. *Georgian Glass Pictures and Needlework Pictures*. London: Mitre Press, 1934.

• Lowes, Mrs. Emily Leigh. *Chats on Old Lace and Needlework*. London: T. Fisher Urwin, 1908.

• Markrich, Lilo and Heinz Edgar Kiewe. *Victorian Fancywork: Nineteenth-Century Needlepoint Patterns and Designs*. London: Pitman, 1975.

• Morris, Barbara. *Victorian Embroidery.* London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962.

• Owen, Mrs. Henry. *The Illuminated Book of Needlework*. Preceded by *A History of Needlework, Including an Account of the Ancient Historical Tapestries*. Edited by the Countess of Wilton. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1847.

• Parker, Rozsika. *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine.* London: Routledge, 1989.

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7. Miscellaneous

• Mary Linwood letter, to Mr. Beach, 8 July, 1829. (#2011-03-30)

The letter reads: "Mr Beach, Sir, I understand you are to be in Leicester Sqr On Friday Morning come early – and bring your Paints with you, I've bro[t] the Landscape for a little more force to be given – you will easily do it when I've pointed it out - do fail to bring your paints – I have spocken to several respecting you, and wish to communicate with you. I will also introduce you to Mr Hilton – Do not fail coming – and tell your Wife not to wait dinner we can give you some thing to eat. Yours truly, M Linwood, Wedednesday 8 July 1829, Leicester Sqr."

• Neyret Frères, *A la source d'après E. Munier*, c.1900-30. Woven silk, image 10.6 x 7 cm, object 11.9 x 7.2 cm. (#010-06-04)

White and black textilograph, woven reproduction of Emile Munier's *À la fontaine, Souvenir de savoie* (1884), which was exhibited in the 1884 Paris Salon. This work is included in Neyret Frère brochure, *Reproductions Artistiques Tissés sur Rubans*.[11] Top and bottom are cut and have adhesive residue, sides are selvage. In lower right corner "NF" and "D'après E. Munier."

Munier was trained at Gobelins in drawing, painting, anatomy, perspective, and chemistry for wool dying, to become an upholstery artist. He supported academic ideals and was a follower of Bouguereau. In 1871 he abandoned his career at Gobelins to devote himself to painting and teaching. His painting can be described as sentimental genre.[12]

Neyret Frères Silks began as a ribbon manufacturer in 1825, and moved by mid-century to specialty ribbons, official decorations and trademark images to avoid fluctuations in women's fashion. It is unclear exactly when the production of artistic reproductions

[11] See: http://www.stevengraphs.com/neyretfreres.html (consulted, Mai 2010).
[12] Eric Devry, great, great, grandson of the artist, at Rehs Galleries, see: http://www.emilemunier.org/index.html.

began. However, this continued until 1970 when their manufacture was deemed too costly. Neyret Frères' woven silk postcards were published mainly by E. Deffrene in France between 1916-1919.[13] This item may have been part of a postcard.

• Three Hiawatha Heirloom Embroidery Picture Kits, 1943. Each kit includes printed image on fabric, embroidery floss, needle, wood frame, and instructions.
L68 *La leçon de musique by Lancret*, image 17.8 x 17.8 cm, frame 24.1 x 24.1 cm.
L69 *L'innocence by Lancret*, image 17.8 x 17.8 cm, frame 24.1 x 24.1 cm.
L25 *A Spanish Villa*, image 15.2 x 20.3 cm, frame 19 x 24.1 cm. (#2012-03-11)

These could be described as stripped-down twentieth-century versions of silkwork. Two are copies of paintings in the Louvre by Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743). By the instructions and amount of thread supplied, only a minor amount of skill or effort is expected. All three boxes were opened but are in good condition, with minor spotting.

William Bird credits Dan Robbins as having invented paint-by-number in 1949. He does not mention the existence if embroidery kits like these. For that fact, he does not mention earlier, eighteenth and nineteenth-century painting guidebooks like Cox's either. Instead he claims that paint-by-number kits are the first such activity for adults, and that Robbins came up with the idea from a story about Leonardo de Vinci, who assigned numbered portions of paintings to his assistants to complete.[14]

• *Chart no. 100, "The Gleaners," 200 x 280 Stitches*, c.1960-1980. (#2011-10-25)

Large grid chart, with symbols in each square, and an accompanying colour key page. Key page lists symbols with numbers and descriptions for Clark's Anchor cotton threads. Designed by Babs Fuhrmann, Toronto, copyrighted. The envelope and accompanying pages are not dated. The colour key page appears to be a liquid-toner copy of a machine-typed page with corrections inscribed by hand and which suggests a date of c.1960-1980. It has a sales sticker on it from Ottawa Needlecraft Centre, 813 Bank $2.25.

• Unknown maker, Pictorial mis-en-carte, nineteenth-century. Grid pattern for weaving, gouache on paper, 87.6 x 74.9 cm. (#2012-03-08)

• Lady Storgianna Fane, *Velvet panel with Elizabethan figure*, c.1820 (?). Velvet with gold thread embroidery, canvas with a variety of embroidery techniques, 48.5 x 56 cm. (#2012-03-09)

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[13] Information about Neyret Frères Silks comes from Charles Neyret and was written up by Malcolm J. Roebuck, see: http://www.stevengraphs.com/neyretfreres.html (consulted, Mai 2010).
[14] William L. Bird, *Paint by Number*. Washington and New York: Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, in association with Princeton Architectural Press, 2001, 27 and 33.

Strange “hybrid” consisting of fine embroidery mixed with canvaswork, with shading as opposed to flat colour, and with added fabric as found in stumpwork. It appears to have been made for display, as an image would be. It is either not as old as the accompanying exhibition label states or is in pristine condition.

• Keystone View Company, *“Sew on your own Buttons, I’m going for a Ride,”* 1899. Black and white stereographic view card.

• Keystone View Company, *Tapestry Weavers, Gobelins Works, Paris*, c.1905-10. Black and white stereographic view card, with text on backside. (#2012-07-25a)

• Keystone View Company, *Weaving Linen Fabric, Montreal, Canada*, c.1905-10. Black and white stereographic view card, with text on backside. (#2012-07-25b)

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APPENDIX: LIST OF MARY LINWOOD PICTURES

Linwood regularly published catalogues to accompany her exhibition of needlepaintings. Below is a list of works compiled from surviving catalogues. It records the title and the artist's name the work was made after, as found in Linwood's catalogues. While the works are not date, this list gives a general time line of their appearance for exhibition. As well, the list outlines popular painters and themes of the period. Some of the names remain familiar while others like Linwood herself, are less so. In her later catalogues, most of the titles are accompanied by a few verses.

Titles from 1800 catalogue, *Exhibition of Miss Linwood's Pictures at the Hanover Square Concert-Rooms*, London.

Landscape – Sun Set …… After Cozens
David with his Sling …… Carlo Dolci
Carp …… J. Miller
Grapes……Jackson
Landscape, Effect of Moon-Light …… Joseph Wright
Girl and Kitten …… Sir Joshua Reynolds
Woodman …… Baker
Pomeranian Dog …… D. Catton
Landscape – a Fishing Party …… An Original
Girl Weeping over a Starved Gold-finch …… Russel
Lodona, from Pope's Winsor Forest …… Maria Cosway
Cottage in Flames …… Joseph Wright
Head of St. Peter …… Guido
Birds – Woodcocks and Kingfisher …… Moses Haughton
Eloisa …… J. Opie
Moon-light …… Rubens
Madonna della Sedia …… Raphael
Sea Piece – Brisk Gale …… J. Ruysdale
Head of King Lear …… Sir Joshua Reynolds
Partridges …… Moses Haughton
Cottage Girl …… Russell
Virgil's Tomb by Moon-Light …… Joseph Wright
Lobster and Crab …… Francis Place, Esq.
An American Owl …… Reinagle
Landscape – Boys Angling …… Wilson
Sleeping Girl …… Sir Joshua Reynolds
Jeptha's Rash Vow [later catalogues spelled Jephthah]…… Opie
Landscape – Sea-through a Rock …… Vernet
Hare …… Moses Haughton
Laughing Girl …… Sir Joseph Reynolds
Gloomy Landscape …… Cozens
Fortune-Tellers …… Rev. W. Peters

Oysters ……..…… Moses Haughton
Small ……..…… Original
Lion and Lioness ……...…… Stubbs
Tygress ……...……...…… Stubbs
Salvator Mundi ……..…… Carlo Dolci
Landscape ……..…… Original
Madonna Della Sedia ……...……...……...…… Raphael

Noted as added to exhibition since opening in 1789.
Ass and Children ……..……..……. Gainsborough
The Gleaner ……..…… Westall

Noted as added to exhibition in 1800.
Woodman ……..……. Gainsborough
Portrait of Miss Linwood ……..……...…… Hopner
Head of Woodman ……..……..…..…… Gainsborough

New titles from 1804 catalogue, *Exhibition of Miss Linwood's Pictures, at Laurie's (late Bernard's) Rooms, Thistle Street*, Edinburgh.

Waterfall ……...……..…….. Ruysdale
Landscape, Effect of Moon-Light near the Head of the Lake Alban...…… Joseph Wright
[likely same work as *Landscape, Effect of Moon-Light,* in 1800 section]
Farmer's Stable ……..… Morland
On a Goldfinch, Starved to Death in a Cage ……...…….…… Russel
[likely same work as *Girl Weeping over a Starved Gold-finch* in 1798 section]
Lodona ……...……..…… Maria Cosway
[likely the same work as *Lodona, from Pope's Winsor Forest*, in 1789 section]
Our Saviour Blessing the Bread and Wine……...…. Carlo Dolci
[likely same work as *Salvator Mundi*, in 1800 section]
Portrait ……...……...… Hopner
[likely the same work as *Portrait of Miss Linwood*, in 1800 section]
Landscape – Boys Angling. Banks of the Dee……...……...…… Wilson
[likely same work as *Landscape – Boys Angling*, in 1800 section]
Mount Vesuvius ……... Wright
Shepherd's Boy in a Storm ……..….. Gainsborough
Landscape ……...…… Cozens
Eloisa – A Nun ……. J. Opie
[likely the same work as *Eloisa*, in 1798 section]

Noted as new to exhibition in 1804
Landscape ……..……...…… Cozens
Landscape ……...……..... Cozens
Fox Alarmed, Stealing From Shelter ……..……...…… Original
Landscape ……...……..... Cozens

No new titles listed in 1810 catalogue, *Exhibition of Miss Linwood's Pictures in Needle Work, at the Hanover-square Concert Rooms*, London.

New titles from 1822 catalogue, *Miss Linwood's Gallery of Pictures in Worsted, Leicester Square*, London.

Fox Tearing a Cock ……..…….. [n.n.]
Pigs ……. Morland
Dog Watching ……. Morland
A Landscape ……..…….…… Francisco Mola
Litter of Foxes ……..…….……..….From a celebrated Painting
[in 1835 catalogue this title is attributed to Charles Loraine Smith, Esq.]
Setters ……..... Morland
Kennel and Dogs ……..... Morland
A Landscape ……..……. Francisco Mola
Dogs at Play ……..…….. Morland
Horse ……..…….. Boultbee
Portrait of General Napoleon Bonaparte ……..……[n.n.] [an original]
Hubert and Arthur ……..…. Northcote
Lady Jane Grey ……..…….. Northcote
Children at the Fire . ……..……..…… Gainsborough
Dog ……..From Nature [an original]
Girl and Cat ……..……..…… Gainsborough
Woman and Child, Taking Shelter From A Storm ……..…….…….. J. Westall
Woodman in the Storm ……..….. Gainsborough
[likely the same work as *Woodman*, in 1800 section]
Nativity ……. Carlos Marratt
Dead Christ, With the Two Mary's …….……..…… Ludovico Carracci

New titles from 1835 catalogue, *Miss Linwood's Exhibition, Leicester Square*, London.

Portrait of Miss Linwood ……..… Russell
Cottage Children ……..…….. Gainsborough
[likely the same work as "Children at the Fire" in 1822 section]
Prtrait of a Lady ……..… Hoppner
[likely same work as "Portrait of Miss Linwood" in 1800, and "Portrait" in 1822]
A Favourit Horse …….…….. Boultbee
[likely same work as "Horse" in 1822 section]
A Sea View ……..……Cozens
A Landscape …….…….…….…….…….…….…….…… Couper
Fox and Cock …….…….…….…….…….……. [n.n.]
[likely the same work as "Fox Tearing a Cock" in 1822 section]

A Landscape …….…….…….…….…….…….…….…. Couper
Frugal Fare ……..……. Russell
A Spaniel ……...……..From Nature [an original]
[likely the same work as “Dog” in 1822 section]
Dead Christ ……...…….…… Ludovico Carracci
[likely the same work as “Dead Christ, With the Two Mary’s” in 1822 section]

Noted as a new addition in 1835
Judgmnt Upon Cain [last work produced according to Lambert] ……..……. [n.n.]