



19th National Exhibit Distinguished Panel of Jurors

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Release of Information May 1, 2007

» Gail Harker

Gail Harker is the founder of Gail Harker Creative Studies Center in Oak Harbor Washington and has been offering City and Guilds of London courses in North America for over 11 years. Gail has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally. Her books include ***Fairytale Quilts and Embroidery***, ***Creative Machine Embroidery: A Practical Sourcebook*** and others.

Gail's view on creative design: "Creative design is the soul of every piece of embroidery. Make the stitches/colors and designs talk to each other and to the viewer. Not as easy as it looks! I have worked and continue to work through the creative process myself, as an artist, and also with my many students who aspire to work as artists. I have seen the eagerness, excitement, hardwork, and desperation plus the elation of those who are trying to acquire the many skills needed to create."



Gail's views on Needlework in Art and History: "Needlework has been used in every country of the world since the beginning of time. Although many countries vary radically in the way in which historical techniques and stitches have been used - the cultural backgrounds of each country are rich, multi-layered and diverse. Some needlework designs and patterns have been used as symbolic or tell a story, while others have been adapted from architecture or other sources. In medieval times the worth of an embroiderer was of the highest value. The 21st Century has a unique place in history. The embroiderer now has the task of designing the embroidery and also executing it. This was not always the case. Previously, artists or architects would most often draw out the design for the embroiderer to stitch. The embroiderer has now entered the era where he/she is creating every aspect of the item made. The general public has, or should have, a higher expectation and appreciation of the art and the technique. It is said that in times of war and prosperity that entire generations of embroidery have disappeared. We need to preserve our historical traditions of embroidery, along with emerging contemporary design and embroidery. The historical embroidery is the backbone of all contemporary embroidery. It is important that we have both elements in our culture."



Philosophy in Judging Needlework: "I evaluate articles of embroidery by carefully studying each image. To begin, I briefly review the images before I read the artist's statement. I am interested to see how the piece stands on its own as a work of art without the benefit of words. I then read the artist statement to understand the intentions or ideas the artist has used. I analyze more slowly, again, by looking at each piece in its entirety, how the stitch contributes to the effect, or is worked for the particular project. I look for the quality of stitch, technique, or fabric manipulations in as much detail as the photography enables me to see. I look at the piece as a composition and I apply art and design principles and elements to evaluate it. Both the Embroidery and the Design should hold equal value. This type of evaluation is the type of thing I do on a full time basis in person, online, by mail, and by telephone with students who are studying at our center and have done so for the past 20 years. Most of all, I try to be fair and helpful to every entrant who spends valuable time and effort to create a work of art and then have it evaluated. Yes, I'm sure you know, it is a labor of love all way around."



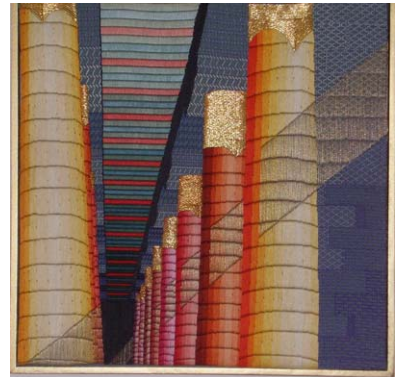
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» Edith Anderson Feisner

Edith Anderson Feisner is a certified EGA needlework teacher, writer and retired college professor. Her publications include ***Color Studies***, ***Color Studies 2nd Edition*** and ***Needlepoint and Beyond***. She has served as juror for numerous exhibits including EGA Challenge with a Twist and the EGA Fiber Forum. Edith is a past recipient of the EGA Teacher of Excellence Award. Her works have been exhibited at the Margaret Parshall Gallery, Nabisco Gallery, and at one-woman shows. Her works are included in the permanent collections of the Valentine Museum, Matthews International, Martha Jefferson Hospital, Jaunt, Inc. and in numerous private collections.



Edith Feisner's views on needlework as art: Needlework's acceptance as a fine art form has been a hard fought battle in the fine art world. When I began my pursuit of the acceptance of embroidery as a fine art, I faced the concept that this concentration was "craft" not fine art. This was in the early 1970s and fiber art was just being appreciated as a fine art. Over these thirty plus years, I have been involved and have seen the needlearts advance to being accepted and appraisal values approach the fine arts' realm. During this period I have also seen and experienced personally the techniques of needlearts improve and the education of the fiber artisan soar. History has appreciated needlework but the respect afforded historical pieces is now profound as evidenced in the shows being mounted by museums and galleries world-wide."



Edith Feisner's Philosophy in Judging Needlework: "Needlework can, and should be viewed as a form of fine art and as such should be judged by the same criteria as any other art form. A judge/juror must view the works presented in their totality. How does the design meet the criteria of design composition — the principles of design (rhythm, balance, proportion, scale, emphasis, and harmony) and the elements of design (space/motion, line, form/shape, light, texture and color)? However, a juror must also appreciate innovative as well as appropriate use of materials and technique. Therefore, the final presentation (framing, mounting, etc) of any work must be an integral part of the overall judging decision."



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» Lee Malerich

Lee Malerich is a fiber artist and teacher living in Neese, South Carolina. Her work has been exhibited in the Mayo Clinic of Jacksonville (FL), the Myrtle Beach Museum, as well as in many other museums and galleries. Lee's work is also represented in the South Carolina Arts Commission's State Art Collection. She continues to portray her views of women and the cultural experience through fiber art and shares her understanding through lectures, exhibits and teaching.

Lee Malerich's view on creative design: "...a work of art should reflect the concerns of the artist as he or she filters events from the culture in which they live." "In my work, I try to create a super saturated image about my life and women's concerns, done in a traditionally feminine discipline. I am filtering my culture in my imagery. To me it is an incredibly legitimate way for woman, especially, to make an image. I teach two-dimensional design at a local college, and assert that all visual art must respond to the universal "truths" that we know about good composition. For the viewer to respond to the visual image, it must be well organized, balanced, exist in an understandable space that the artist has created, and have some idea behind it that is engaging. This can be a narrative, an abstraction, or simply point to the materials in and of themselves."



Lee Malerich's views on feminism and the fiber

disciplines: "...the importance of fiber disciplines and their relationship to feminism in the seventies. It was said, and is true, that the textile departments in the academy were big (I was in school then.), and they are not now, and this should be paired up with the rise and fall of feminism. I had never stopped to think about this in this way. I have observed the crafts change as the computer and its design capabilities began to dominate. And I saw the change in attitude towards textiles as part of the turning away from fine arts and fine crafts towards the technology of the computer. This is an issue that I will have to think about - could it be true that textiles emerged in the seventies as a way to make a visual image, expanding then from traditional uses, and now, when feminism can be a negative word, the tradition in textiles is now again more important?"

Lee's Philosophy in Judging Needlework: "As an artist who makes contemporary and personal images with stitches and fabric, I see embroidered work almost as a painted visual image, residing slightly in the world of the three dimensions. Embroidered work is often richer than painted images because the stitches cast a slight shadow. I see the stitch as a brush stroke. I see the stitch(es) as words in a visual paragraph. Embroidered pieces are often better constructed than many paintings. I believe that this comes from the fact that along with being artists, we are craftspeople, and we have been taught to make a surface with the integrity of a craftsman. I hope that in my own work, I use the abstract expression of a painter with the craftsmanship of the craft artisan."