

HOW ABOUT?

with Louise Howland



In this issue, Louise explores how getting creative with others' designs can give your projects a fresh new twist.

Stitching for its own sake is as relaxing, beautiful and satisfying pastime as can be found. Am I stating the obvious? With a little care and the right light – also glasses for me these days – the end result generally turns out more or less as the photograph promises.

As I look through my copy of *Creative Embroidery & Cross Stitch* I wonder which projects will be stitched and whether there will be personalisation and variation of those projects.

In this day and age where everything is franchised – I was surprised to see that so many of the musicals on Broadway and in the West End are the same as those showing in Australia – there is satisfaction when we individualise what we do.

Even if we don't design our cross stitch, embroidery or quilt, putting our personal touch on an existing work is extraordinarily satisfying. One purpose of our imagination is surely to avoid boredom!

Many of us think that some people are creative and others are not – this is a myth. Creativity is part of being alive, but sometimes we need to encourage and stimulate our imaginations by capturing ideas, stretching, loosening, bending and shifting our thoughts outside the box.

Creativity does require us to be curious; and curiosity involves questioning. Could different threads be used? Another fabric? Would altering the stitches in that area affect the whole in a positive way? If I take the elements that I like from this piece and add them to that one, will the end result be aesthetically pleasing to me?

Making sketches, colouring, and experimenting with pieces of coloured paper or scraps of fabric, can all help your imagination by assisting you to visualise results. An orderly, systematic person can make change by experimenting with random disarray and asymmetry. Someone with impulsive tendencies may find new freedom within boundaries and restrictions. Time spent envisaging, dreaming and looking both inwards and outwards, allows us to examine a variety of possibilities, leading to fresh artistic decisions. What would happen if the light area became dark? How would a change in perspective affect this angle? To create something we may first have to destroy.

Creativity is another word for courage. Tinkering with the stitches you know, as a jazz musician tinkers with the familiar melodies, is about being brave enough to let go of the certainties and connect what seems to be unconnected.



Projects by Helen Dafter

How do professional designers feel about their patterns being altered for personal use and satisfaction?

Helen Dafter, silk-ribbon designer, author and teacher, says "If someone chooses a design of mine as their starting point, I am delighted. It means that they have connected with my work in some way and it is a stepping stone in their personal journey".

All creativity involves a degree of risk: this embroidery may not be like the photo if we alter certain components. On the other hand, the process will teach us and the end result will be unique.

Isn't it better to have lots of ideas, even though some won't be right, than to be always right by having no new ideas at all?

Until next month,

Louise