

Aurata Embroidery Newsletter

Lazy summer days...

...would be great! But really summer time is a busy few months for me. As term time classes end, there is a bit of a rush to finish projects for final assessment then it's straight into the summer class schedule.

If you do find yourself with some lazy days why not teach yourself something new? Turn to the project section and have a go at French Knitting. It's easy to learn and you need minimal equipment.

Don't forget to check out the A-Z of art. This month it's D for Jaques - Louis David and the lesson is don't open the door to strangers!

This month I have an extended article on a piece of embroidery from my own personal collection. Embroidery may be undervalued, but this in turn makes it a fairly collectible subject. Keep your eyes peeled in charity shops, bazaars and don't forget on line auction sites!

Sarah



Van Peg

What I'm up to...

I have a few classes to prepare for including summer oranges (see below) in canvas work and stumpwork and a class based on my Bridging Arts Sari design (keep an eye on my website for more news on classes).

I have started a new project which I intend to follow up at a leisurely pace as and when I can (usually when I should be doing something else!). See the 'and finally...' section at the end of this newsletter for more information. There is a clue in the picture above!



"I get satisfaction of three kinds. One is creating something, one is being paid for it and one is the feeling that I haven't just been sitting on my ass all afternoon."

- William F. Buckley

D is for... David

Full name: Jacques-Louis David

Born: 30th August 1748, Paris

Movement: Neoclassicism

A little bit of info:

David was an influential painter in his time and led an exciting life. His father was killed in a duel when David was about 9 and he was sent to live with his Uncles. He attended the Royal Academy, now the Louvre. He became an active supporter of the French Revolution and was imprisoned after Robespierre fell from Power.

One of his most famous paintings (see right) was from this time. When David was released from prison, he remarried his former wife telling her he had never ceased loving her. He retired from politics and retreated into his studio.

Other famous paintings of his include many of Napoleon whom he allied himself with after his release from prison.

He died at the age of 77 in self exile in Brussels after being struck by a carriage as he was leaving the theatre. His body was refused entry back to France for burial but his heart was buried in Paris.

Where to see David paintings:

National Gallery, London; Louvre, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Belgium.



David's good friend Jean-Paul Marat, a political journalist, was stabbed in the bath by Charlotte Corday after she gained entry to his house claiming to have information of interest to him. Charlotte Corday was guillotined four days later.

Death of Marat
Jacques-Louis David

A must see!

Natasha Fadeeva

www.fadeeva.com/animals

I often go back to this site just to have another look at these knitted animals. There are many hand knitted animals around, (I'm sure everyone has had one at some point in their life!) but I think these ones are exceptional.

Before you get excited, all the ones on this site are (not surprisingly) sold. Join her mailing list to be notified of new ones for sale. Check out also her video game. Yes, a video game involving knitted animals! Can't wait to see that...



Viewing website information:

You should be able to view any of the underlined website links in this newsletter. All you have to do is hover your mouse over the link and click!

Paper copy of this newsletter? Just type the address into your browser.

From my collection

Lotus shoes

Hand embroidered shoes for bound feet

Foot binding dates from about the 10th century and was a practice initially applied to aristocratic women in China. The origins of it and reasons behind it are still argued about 1000 years later but the results of this practice can still be seen in the beautiful embroidered lotus shoes. I never cease to be amazed at how something so beautiful can come from something so painful and debilitating (whatever the reasons behind it).



From
'Every step a Lotus'

My mum went on a trip to China and these were the one thing I asked her to bring back (knowing that a panda wouldn't be allowed on the aeroplane).



The soles are just 11cm (4 ½ inches) long and are hand stitched with an embroidered motif on the front.



Website

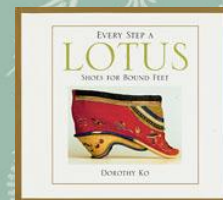
Don't forget to visit me at www.sarahhomfray.com for current information on where I am teaching, new gallery pictures, get involved through my blog and keep an eye out for some free stuff!

Don't forget you can also shop **On line!** Pay with Paypal or by post. New items being added regularly.

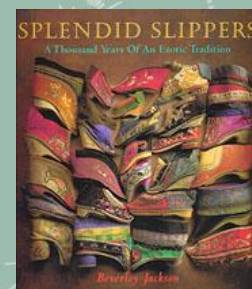
Recommended Read

Two excellent books on the subject of Lotus shoes and foot binding:

'Every Step a Lotus' - Dorothy Ko.
Published by University of California Press,
London 2001



'Splendid Slippers' – Beverley Jackson.
Published by Ten Speed Press, California
1997



A project

Teach yourself... French Knitting

What you will need:
Knitting spool (or 'knitting Nancy') -
Available from most craft suppliers.
Large needle or small crochet hook or
other pointed device! (see picture)
Wool, thread

How to work:

1) Thread the end of your wool down through the hole in the spool leaving some for finishing off.



2) Wrap the top thread around each 'eye' of the spool like so:



3) To start the knitting, take the thread across the next eye. Use a needle or crochet hook to lift this thread over the eye.



4) Work your way around the spool using the hook to lift the thread over each eye as you go.



Clockwise from top:

Traditional French
knitting spool

wool

Home made spool

French knitting needle

Large spool

French Knitting equipment

Continued...

Pull the finishing thread down occasionally to pull the knitting through the spool.

To finish off, don't wrap the thread around the spool anymore but lift one loop off with the needle and slip it onto the next eye. Now lift the loop underneath this one over the eye. Continue around the spool until you have one loop left. Lift the knitting off the spool carefully and pass the finishing thread through this and pull tight.

What you can use it for:

Necklaces, bracelets, circular mats, link together to make chains.

TIP: Search the internet! There is loads of stuff available on this subject; it's only limited by your imagination! You could also try to beat the Guinness world record for the longest piece of French knitting if you have some spare time on your hands...



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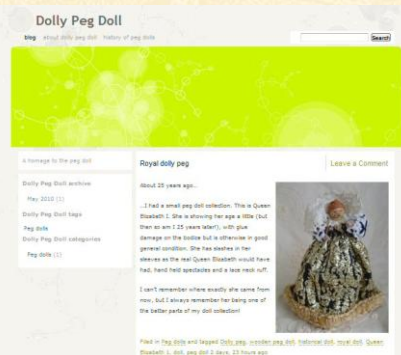
If you have enjoyed this newsletter and would like it to arrive in your inbox 'hot off the press' as they say, please send me a message through the contact page of my website. Please pass it on to anyone who you think might be interested!

If you would prefer not to receive this in the future please e-mail me at the address in the contact section on the last page, entering "unsubscribe" in the message box.

And finally...

Dolly Peg Doll – A new site dedicated to the humble peg doll

I have set up a new website specifically for peg dolls. This is more of a hobby at the moment but it is all related to needlework and I hope one day to develop this further (a book is my aim!)



The site features examples from my own collection, a gallery of readers' dolls, a blog and items for sale.

Click here to visit:

www.dollypegdoll.wordpress.com



To get in touch:

Everything is now in one place!
Website, shop, blog and contact form
can all be found at:

www.sarahhomfray.com

Telephone:
07713713843

Just for peg dolls:
www.dollypeg.wordpress.com

