

August 2012

July and August are exciting sporting months in the United Kingdom with the Olympic torch being carried throughout the British Isles and with local cyclist Bradley Wiggins winning the Tour de France, the first time a British cyclist has won this prestigious event. It is a forerunner to the 2012 Olympic Games in London and whilst I am not especially interested in sport I will be watching some events, probably with needlework in one hand and coffee in the other whilst urging them on!

I had the pleasure of meeting a very special lady in recently. Maureen is a needlewoman from Canada who was awarded some money to study blackwork at the Royal School of Needlework and whilst she was visiting England she came north to Manchester with her friends, Cheryl and Albina to meet me. After spending a day touring Chester, we headed for Manchester to spend an interesting evening looking at each other's needlework and comparing notes.



The Three Musketeers!

Maureen also teaches classes in blackwork and as we have so much in common, it was a joy to spend time with them and I hope one day to make a return visit to Quebec.

May I take this opportunity of wishing The Lakeshore Creative Stitchery Guild in Pointe Claire, Quebec many more happy years of stitching and companionship and Maureen's students, a very productive time! I know she will work you very hard...

Materials and background colours

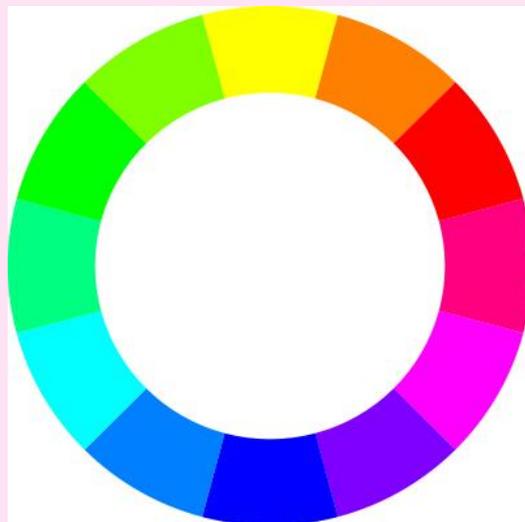
This month I have been looking at materials and background colours:

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I tend to use white fabric when designing because white evenweave and Aida are available worldwide. However, many other coloured fabrics are often overlooked and working solely on white does have some disadvantages. The glare from white fabric can cause eyestrain, whereas cream is much softer to work with and may be preferable, but we live in a world of colour and it alters our perception of the world around us and is part of our own identity. For example, just looking at flowers with their different colours, shapes and textures can quickly make one appreciate the part colour plays in our lives.



If I am asked to create a design in colours that I do not normally use, I am seldom completely happy with the result because it is often alien to me, but this does not inhibit me from trying different backgrounds and threads merely because of my own perceptions. I naturally turn towards the blues/pinks and avoid the yellows/greens, but everyone sees colour differently, so select a range you find comfortable to work with.

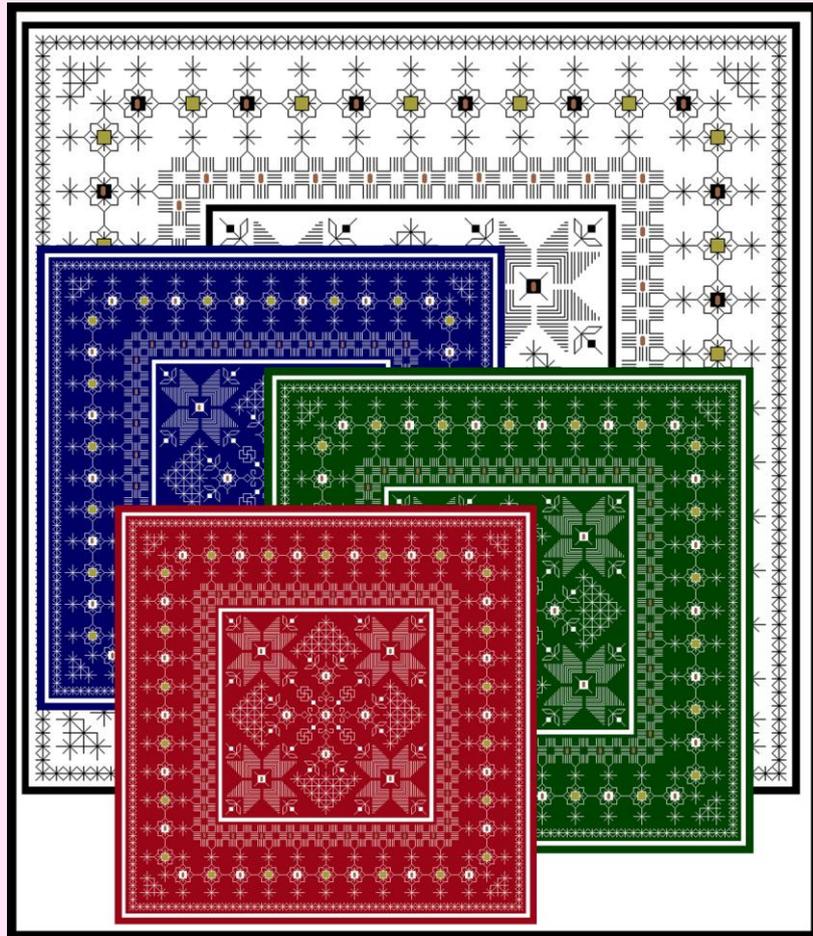


Modern Colour Wheel

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The aim of a colour wheel is to illustrate primary and secondary, complementary and tertiary colours - a circle of light-dark and cold-warm contrasts. The "wheel" is based on six colours in the optical spectrum: violet, blue, green, yellow, orange and red, the same colours that are visible in a rainbow. I instinctively turn towards the violet, blue, pink, red aspects of the wheel!

Using a colour wheel helps when selecting related colours, but should not rule out unusual combinations if they appeal to you!



The same principle applies to embroidery. An identical design placed on four different background fabrics creates very diverse effects.

It is much harder on the eyes to work on a dark evenweave fabric even with a magnifying lens and light. Place a piece of white material underneath a darker fabric to make the holes clearer.

For more information on different embroidery fabrics go to the "Techniques" section "Part 11 Fabrics for Embroidery" which examines in detail the different types of embroidery fabrics available and their advantages and disadvantages.

Happy stitching,

Liz