

OPEN SOURCE EMBROIDERY
GALLERY GUIDE



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October 2, 2009 – January 24, 2010

Access Space, Suzanne Brook Martin, Ele Carpenter, Iain Clark, Emma Ferguson, Flare Productions, Paul Grimmer, Richard Hamilton, Suzanne Hardy, HUMlab Workers, James Hutchinson, Charlene Lam, Kristina Lindström & Åsa Stahl, The Sampler Collective: David Littler, Sophie McDonald & Davide Della Casa, Travis J. Meinolf, Kate Pemberton, Trevor Pitt, Michele Pred, Clare Ruddock, Hamilton, Southern & St Amand, Becky Stern, Haishu Zhang

The *Open Source Embroidery* exhibition presents artworks that use embroidery, thread, and code as a tool for participatory production and distribution. The *Open Source Embroidery* project includes workshops and exhibitions that investigate how the open-source software development model has been incorporated into the language of cultural participation.

This major exhibition at the Museum of Craft and Folk Art brings together individual and collectively made artworks by artists, makers, computer programmers, and HTML users that explore the relationship between craft and code through social and digital networks. The works experiment with interdisciplinary approaches to modifying patterns, the DIY culture of hacking and sampling in sounds, GPS, and mobile technologies.

Open Source Embroidery is curated by Ele Carpenter, HUMlab Research Fellow in partnership with BildMuseet, Umeå, Sweden. The exhibition has been developed by BildMuseet and the Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco, and supported by Adobe Action Grants, Arts Council England, Canada Council, Fleishhacker Foundation, the Galleria Park Hotel, San Francisco Arts Commission Organization Project Grant, and the San Francisco Foundation's 2009 Fund for Artists Matching Commission. The Museum of Craft and Folk Art is generously supported by the Compton Foundation, Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, The Kimball Foundation, Harold and Gertrud Parker, The San Francisco Foundation, The Sato Foundation, Museum members, and friends.

See also www.open-source-embroidery.org.uk

OSE Pixel Bluetooth*, 2009*Kate Pemberton**

Follow the instructions on the poster to download the Open Source Embroidery (OSE) Pixel Image onto your mobile phone using Bluetooth.

Sampler Culture-Clash*, 2008–2009*Facilitated by David Littler**

The *Sampler Culture-Clash* project is a play on the English word “sampler” to describe sampling in music and embroidery. The project brings together the very different cultures of embroidery and deejaying through collectively exploring textile samplers and music samplers. The Sampler Collective is facilitated by David Littler, working with multimedia artist, deejay, and beatboxer Jason Singh and spoken-word artist Yusra Warsama, along with embroiderers, museums, music producers, and curators of embroidery collections to create a series of events and artworks.

In the reception area you are invited to contribute to *CopynPaste*, *Pixel Sampler Drawing*, and *A-Z Audio Stitching*:

CopynPaste uses a photocopied image of embroidery samplers to create the “copy and paste” function of computer editing and design in physical space. The original embroideries are from the Västerbottens Museum, Umeå, Sweden.

Pixel Sampler Drawing invites people to design embroidery patterns on graph paper that are then inputted into the Reactor computer program, which translates the image into sound.

A-Z Audio Stitching invites you to listen to a selection of Sampler poetry while you graffiti-stitch the armchairs.

In the Museum Store:

Artworks by Emma Ferguson and Trevor Pitt for sale.

(Projects organized alphabetically by artist's last name)

YARN Text, 2008–2009

Facilitated by Ele Carpenter

OSE Fika workshops at HUMlab inspired the stitching of the Raqs Media Collective's definition of "Yarn" (Sarai, 2003), which describes the metaphorical and material quality of threads and cables, and how they carry stories through weaving, stitching, and bandwidth:

"Fabrics and stories are made from yarn. A yarn is a snatch of reality that travels by word of mouth. Or it is shipped with lots of HTML cargo. It is said that each fragment of code contains rumours and gossip, or yarns about the makers of the code. Yarns collect in basement cyber cafes, in stairwells of cinemas, in call centres, and behind the opaque surface of the walls of an apartment whose address is Error 404, which can be anywhere and everywhere at once. In these places, yarn collectors stitch different stretches of code-fabric to make long bolts of data, which are then taken apart by hackers, and distributed into many orbits. Yarns can adjust the amount of information they bear in relation to the width of bandwidth. That is why yarns are good kernels." (Raqs Media Collective, In: 2003,365)

HTML Patchwork and related works, 2007–2009

Facilitated by Ele Carpenter

The *HTML Patchwork* and *Patchwiki* were facilitated by Ele Carpenter. The project brought together software programmers, HTML users, and craftspeople to share their skills and knowledge and stitch 216 fabric patches and wiki pages. Each patch is embroidered with its hexadecimal RGB color code, then personalized by the sewer, often with their URL. The work was initiated through a residency at Access Space, an open-source, open-access media lab in Sheffield, UK.

James Wallbank and Keith o'Faoláin scripted the *Patchwiki* to display the 216 web pages for each of the sewers to upload their images and experiences of making their patches.

During this process, Wallbank created *Hexart GDlib Script Error*, printed onto canvas as a static artwork. The image demonstrates how a computer script creates an image by plotting an array of shapes, colors, and numbers.

The patchwork is shown alongside the Visibone mouse mat that inspired the design. Visibone makes educational materials for learning about software code and programming.

***i luv you*, 2006**

Emma Ferguson

This embroidery of a mobile phone complements the *stitching together* SMS message quilt, using traditional techniques to explore everyday language.

***To Dream Tomorrow: Ada Byron Lovelace*, 2003, 52 minutes**
Flare Productions, directed by John Füegi and Jo Francis

This documentary film about the life and work of Ada Byron, Countess of Lovelace, describes the significance of her contribution to computer science. The history of computing as craft begins with the Jacquard Loom (1801), the first programmed machine that used binary punch cards to design woven patterns. The loom inspired Charles Babbage in his design of the analytical engine, the precursor to the modern computer. Ada Lovelace wrote extensive notes about the analytical engine, and saw the potential of the machine to operate not just as a calculator of numbers, but also as a computer of symbols and information.

***Free the Kensington 3, Ada Lovelace*, 1998**
Richard Hamilton

In 1998 Richard Hamilton designed a series of posters for the campaign to keep free public entry to the three South Kensington Museums (Natural History Museum, Science Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum) in London. One of the posters depicted Ada Lovelace, who worked on the precursor to the modern computer with Charles Babbage, and made analogies between the Jacquard loom and the analytical engine. Hamilton's use of her image makes connections between issues of freedom and access in both computing and culture. The work was commissioned by Engage BECTU, National Campaign for the Arts and VAGA.

***Running Stitch, Umeå*, 2009**
Hamilton, Southern & St Amand

Jen Hamilton and Jen Southern, working with Chris St. Amand, use satellite navigation technology to explore urban environments. The data generated from walking routes is processed to create collaborative and personalized maps. Working with several art galleries, they developed the *Running Stitch* artwork to create embroidered maps by giving visitors GPS mobile phones to track their journeys.

The *Running Stitch Umeå* map was created during the *Open Source Embroidery* exhibition at BildMuseet, Umeå, Sweden. The map acknowledges the Sami indigenous people of Sweden, who today use GPS to track their reindeer. The Sami colors (blue, red, yellow, and green) have been used to stitch visitors' walks throughout the city of Umeå.

Running Stitch captures the city space through the movement of its inhabitants. The paths become drawings of the city, which are then projected live in the gallery to disclose aspects of the city unknown to the artists. Each individual route is then sewn into a canvas to form an evolving tapestry that reveals a sense of place and interconnection. The work uses landline open-source software developed with Onteca Ltd., a multiuser drawing tool for mobile phone and Bluetooth GPS that allows users to draw by moving in real space.

Knit-a-Blog*, 2004–2006*Facilitated by Suzanne Hardy**

In 2004, a blog post challenged Suzanne (Glittgirl) Hardy to “knit a garment in the style of a blog.” Her response was to involve other knitters in a conversationlike piece, where each knitter could respond to the addition of the previous, using yarn and needles. Glittgirl recruited international contributors through The Knitty™ Coffeeshop online web forum. Twenty knitters were recruited in days, but the blog took more than two years to complete.

GYRMBC Tent*, 2009*HUMLab Workers**

The GYRMBC (*Get Your Rabbits Mated Before Christmas*) Tent was created by HUMLab workers to illustrate the combination of RGB and CMYK color sequences. Inspired by the *HTML Patchwork*, *GYRMBC Tent* incorporates both digital (Red Green Blue) and print color (Cyan Magenta Yellow black) processes. The difference between screen and print color systems explains the impossibility of trying to match fabric and web-safe colors, evident in the *HTML Patchwork*. The one-person tent creates a space for individual creativity alongside the opportunity to collaborate with others.

Shaggy Modernism*, 2009*James Hutchinson**

James Hutchinson has exported a digital drawing from mobile phone to felt rug, traditionally called a “proggy mat” in England. The images are first printed on Hessian fabric; then traditional felt rug techniques are used to create a soft sculpture.

stitching together*, 2007–*Kristina Lindström and Åsa Ståhl (å+k)**

The *stitching together* project invites SMS message users to share text messages, and transform them into tangible and physical text messages made out of thread and fabric. The project reveals the complexity of choosing the text messages we keep and those we delete, and how the messages are deeply intertwined with relations to people, situations, and technology in our everyday lives.

Knitted Pattern*, 2009*Suzanne Brook Martin**

Researcher in Scandinavian studies and knitter Suzanne Brook Martin created a flat-screen cover that describes the Swedish knitting pattern for making the cover. The green characters draw an analogy between computer code and knitting code, each describing a set of instructions for a mathematical formula to create another image or artwork. While software programming languages are in English, knitting patterns use native language abbreviations. The work was made in response to the *OSE Fika* workshops at HUMLab.

SketchPatch*, 2009*Sophie McDonald & Davide Della Casa**

SketchPatch is a net-based collaborative programming project developed by artist Sophie McDonald and computer programmer Davide Della Casa. The site enables people to use simple processing scripts to create visual, animated, and interactive online drawings that can be easily shared and modified.

SketchPatch makes processing code accessible to a broad audience through a shared learning environment. New coders are encouraged to hack experienced coders' work, re-sampling and modifying the code to create new works. The site allows users to create a new processing sketch, write code into it, preview the code, and then save it to a gallery. They can also open an existing sketch from the gallery and adjust its code, then preview and save it as a new piece of work.

Social Fabric*, 2009–2010*Travis J. Meinolf**

Action-weaver Travis Meinolf is a public textile artist who explores weaving as a social process and alternative economy. He is interested in an alternative production model in which exchange can be understood as the material expression of relationships, and manufacture of goods can be enjoyed as play.

The ongoing *Social Fabric* project invites people to create woven textiles, and collaborate on new designs. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to use the design wall, mini-loom, and donated yarn to create new weavings. Please ask at the reception desk for information about workshops.

***Piracy Forever*, 2009**

Kate Pemberton

The embroidery series *Piracy Forever* uses .NFO files, found attached to music and software releases, and copies the ASCII into stitch as permanent versions of these otherwise ephemeral digital signposts.

Warez scenes or groups used .NFO files to digitally sign and provide information about a pirate software release. The .NFO text file contains simple text information and often text-based ASCII art. As software publishers made their products more resistant to copying, the files became more complex to break or hack. Pirates increasingly used .NFO files to give elaborate instructions on how to get around copy-protection methods and to claim the bragging rights to the fact that their Warez group had cracked the software. Using ASCII or simple text-based patterns, the groups created complex logos and icons alongside a credit list and requests for new members and hackers to join their group.

***Collective Pixel Sampler Drawings*, 2008–2009**

The Sampler Collective

The Sampler Collective has created a series of collective *Pixel Sampler Drawings*. The *Drawings* have been re-sampled and inputted into Reactor software to create the sound sequence playing in the exhibition.

***Telnit Ø: Time for Bed.2*, 2007**

Lisa Wallbank

Lisa Wallbank's computer cover depicts the computer's shutdown command to instruct the user to switch off. The work was made at the Open Source Embroidery workshops at Access Space, UK.

***HUMLab Cross Stitch*, 2008**

Haishu Zhang

Haishu Zhang meticulously cross-stitched the HUMLab logo, based on her hand-drawn pattern. The work transforms the digital brand into a domestic format. HUMLab is a digital humanities research lab at Umeå University in Sweden. The embroidery emphasizes the location of the lab by depicting the traditional Swedish tree motif border.

Open Source Embroidery at Access Space

Access Space is an open-access open-source media Lab in Sheffield, UK. They host artists' residencies, and exhibitions exploring ideas of open access, software culture, and participation. Ele Carpenter was artist in residence at Access Space in 2007, where she ran a series of workshops for programmers, HTML users, and craftspeople. As well as making fabric patches and wiki pages for the *HTML Patchwork*, participants made several new artworks.

John Keenan's weaving re-uses electrical cable donated to Access Space, and Mark Gibbens's biscuit cutter was made from metal recycled from a computer case. Jake Harris and Keith o'Faoláin collaboratively created an electronic embroidery performance for Access Space. Using steel wire, they wove a hash symbol on a t-shirt and connected it to a Weevil synthesizer made by Tom Bug.

HTML Embroideries, 2006–2008**Ele Carpenter**

Ele Carpenter stitches HTML embroideries in response to specific contexts and conversations. *Ada HTML* was created specially for this exhibition to highlight the historical contribution of Lovelace's work to our understanding of craft and computing, as explored by Sadie Plant, 1997.

The *Many:Many* scarf describes the topologies of 1:Many and Many:Many communications networks, inspired by Paul Baran's network diagrams, 1964, and Bertolt Brecht's essay "The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication," 1932.

The *Everyone an Artist/ Programmer* scarf was inspired by Simon Yuill's essay comparing Joseph Beuys' slogan "Everyone an Artist" with Linus Torvalds' call "Everyone a Programmer." The work juxtaposes ideas of participation in visual art and programming, and was stitched during *OSE Fika* at HUMlab.

The *Strong Peace/ Bold Ceasefire* bags were stitched at Flax Arts Studios in Belfast during the conflict between Israel and Lebanon in 2006. The work uses HTML as a form of activist concrete poetry.

Translating Socialism, 2007**Ele Carpenter**

"Socialism is something that we do, day by day, here and now, on the one hand against the ideologists of purity... and on the other hand, against the iron sergeants of strategic extremism."

—Italo Calvino, in a letter to Francesco Leonatti, 13 June 1962

This embroidery was stitched in response to the question: Clash of Comrades: What does socialism or anarchy mean to you? For: *The 2007 Almanac of Political Art*, B+B, contributor 24. Available at: www.reunionprojects.org.uk

PHP Embroidery, 2007**Iain Clark*****Ether (Swatch), 2007*****Paul Grimmer**

Paul Grimmer and Iain Clark make visible the physical space of data transmission. Their works were made separately, but are shown here together. Grimmer's *Ether (swatch)* woven network cable connects Iain Clarke's *PhP Embroidery* code from the network to the computer in the gallery. Iain Clark's PhP code creates the sequence of multicolored shapes, which are reconfigured with each page auto-refresh. <http://www.iainclark.co.uk/embroidery>

The Expression of Femininity, 2006–2007**Emma Ferguson**

Emma Ferguson's series of embroideries *The Expression of Femininity* explores the gender politics behind the iconography and language of digital media. Works such as *Motherboard* are shown here. Ferguson has created a new range of Mac icon cross-stitch jewelry for OSE, available for purchase in the shop alongside her embroidered TV and cassette-tape purses.

The Words You Say Are Not the Words I Mean (Colorful Sayings), 2009**Charlene Lam**

American idioms that mention color are embroidered on cloth, with HTML hexadecimal codes in place of the colors. HTML hex codes use a combination of letters and numbers to define color for computer display. Idioms and expressions are a way of embellishing or embroidering the bare structure of a language, and in this case, literally "adding color" to communication. Since idioms are by definition specific to a region, period, or people, the meaning may not always translate. The work aims to encourage conversation among museum visitors by explaining the meaning of the HTML code as well as the cultural and linguistic roots of the idioms.

Soft Bench, 2005**Trevor Pitt**

Soft Bench is an intervention into a public space knitted by a group of ladies from the Glebe Farm Estate in Birmingham, UK. Facilitated by Trevor Pitt, the knitters devised patterns for covering the public bench, which were then printed to inspire others. Beryl Pitt's hand-written patterns for the bench are exhibited here alongside the finished knitting pattern. The knitters were acknowledged in a nametape stitched onto the reverse of the bench. The printed Soft Bench Knitting Patterns designed by Absolute Zero are available for purchase in the shop.

You Are What You Buy*, 2007*Michele Pred**

Michele Pred has created an embroidered barcode to represent how technology has become interwoven in our lives and identities. By using new software applications, mobile phones are now capable of scanning and decoding 2D barcodes. These 2D barcodes are composed of black and white squares that encode URLs to any website of the creator's choice. In other words, these data matrix format barcodes are a physical hyperlink.

To decode the artwork, go to <http://get.qode.com> in your handset's web browser, and follow the instructions from the website.

Handmade and Calling Cards*, 2007*Clare Ruddock**

Handmade is an embroidered copy of a hand-drawn illustration of a handmade cup of tea in a hand-painted cup found on the Internet. The embroidery adds another layer to the process of translating the concept of the handmade through a series of materials and formats. In *Calling Cards*, Clare Ruddock embroiders web addresses onto handkerchiefs, combining the romance of a Victorian lady dropping her handkerchief and the formal business card or email signature.

LilyPad Arduino Embroidery: A Tribute to Leah Buechley*, 2008*Becky Stern**

This embroidery uses electronics components, including the LilyPad Arduino and conductive thread, to create light and sound from the embroidery itself. The work is a tribute to Leah Buechley, who designed the commercially available LilyPad Arduino tool kit.

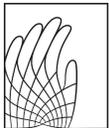
Thanks To:

Dr. Ele Carpenter is a curator, artist, and writer currently undertaking a Research Fellowship with HUMlab and BildMuseet at Umeå University. She is also lecturer in MFA curating at Goldsmiths London University.

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